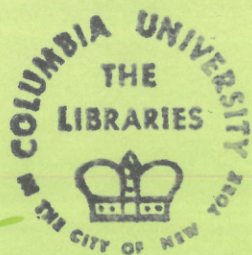


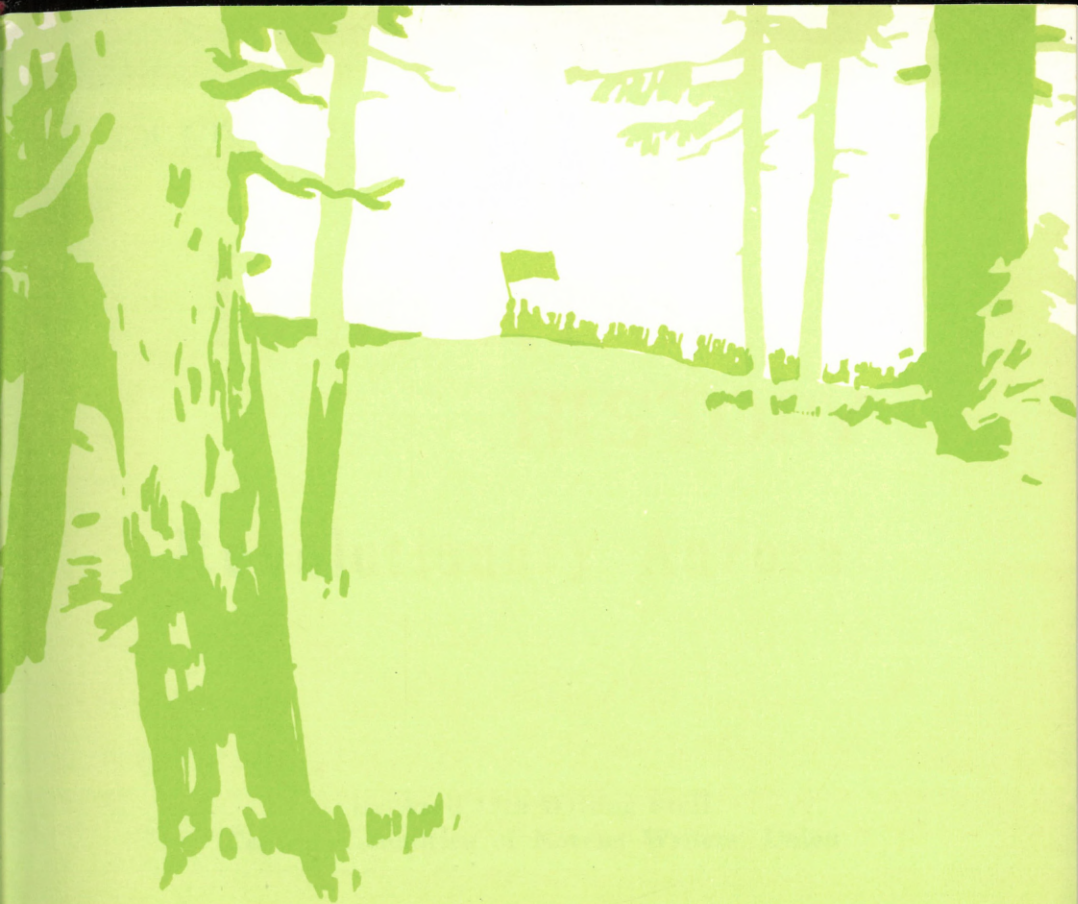

A CYCLE OF NOVELS

IMMORTAL HISTORY

Revolutionary Aurora

PYONGYANG, KOREA
1979





THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
PRESS

A CYCLE OF NOVELS

IMMORTAL HISTORY

Revolutionary Aurora

By April 15th Writing Staff
Central Committee of Korean Writers' Union

Foreign Languages Publishing House
Pyongyang, Korea

1979



The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung presides over a meeting of Young Communist League

CONTENTS

Chapter I	A STAR	. . . . .	1
Chapter II	SOWING THE SEEDS	. . . . .	41
Chapter III	SNOWSTORM OVER CHIANGNAN PARK	. . . . .	71
Chapter IV	RISING WAVES {1}	. . . . .	105
Chapter V	RISING WAVES {2}	. . . . .	132
Chapter VI	THE SUNRAYS SPREAD	. . . . .	157
Chapter VII	ON THE WHARF	. . . . .	189
Chapter VIII	HAPPINESS	. . . . .	206
Chapter IX	THE INTERNATIONALE	. . . . .	230
Chapter X	AUTUMN	. . . . .	260
Chapter XI	THE THRONE OF PINE KINGDOM	. . . . .	286
Chapter XII	HARD TIMES	. . . . .	313
Chapter XIII	LIFE IS HOPEFUL	. . . . .	338
Chapter XIV	RAINSTORM IN THE CAMPUS	. . . . .	360
Chapter XV	TO THE SQUARE	. . . . .	389
Chapter XVI	BURNING YOUTH	. . . . .	420
Chapter XVII	HYMN	. . . . .	450

CHAPTER I

A STAR

1

The whole universe is wrapped in darkness, the sky overcast with ebony clouds. Now and then, the snowstorm howls like a wild beast. Now, everything seems to be past, leaving nothing except the dark, the cold, the snow and the raging storm. Where is there light, where warmth? There is no light anywhere.

This is Kirin.

Here and there, in the gloomy street, lamps quiver like fireflies. They look like the dying embers in a great mass of ash. They give no light; rather they increase the unease, the gloom and shadow of this oppressive night. Yet the roaring blizzard, jealous even of this feeble flicker, rattles the smooth lamp shades.

At this moment, a hoarse voice is heard in an assembly hall on the outskirts of the town, defying the darkness.

"In Korea it is pitch-dark night, so dark that you can't see even a step ahead. Locked in this black hopelessness, our people are desperate to get out. We have to show them a way out. A way out...."

Many students tried to get up on the platform to speak, and getting there, all spoke with passion, striking the desk top with clenched fist. A student, touching on the history of the independence movement, said this was where they should learn, should find the way, but another shouted that they must cast aside the old, should explore and find a road that was completely new. This caused a stir among the audience, and before it had subsided, a high-pitched voice was heard to ask which lesson and what new road.

The arguments varied and most stuck stubbornly to their own. There was little agreement and no compromise. Each believed

that no other was as truly concerned as he about their homeland and their people; and when you believe that, how can you give way to others? So night after night they sat there shouting themselves hoarse and getting no nearer to any conclusion, quite unable to find the new road for Korea that they were all so anxiously seeking.

The assembly hall, however, was not the only place that was hectic.

In a rice-cleaning mill in a back-street another crowd of students were just as hotly debating Korean independence. And they, too, were divided, each refuting the other's argument.

Which way should we turn? Show us the way! Where is light? Give us light, they shouted writhing.

The students were excited. So were the Independence Army soldiers who had shed their blood in battle.

Paek Rak Jin's house, near Niumahang Street, was packed: here the Independence Army leaders were holding a meeting. As a conference on the amalgamation of "Chongui-bu", "Sin-min-bu" and "Chamui-bu"—organizations under the Independence Army—was near at hand, they were discussing how to make the conference a success and how to revitalize Korea's declining independence movement.

Li Gap Mu, the old leader of "Chongui-bu", took the place of honour. He sat and sighed, shaking the white beard that hung down over his chest. In his view the Korean independence movement was on the wane, fading like the moon in the morning. However, Paek Rak Jin, a centre parting in his curly hair, sat beside the old man, audaciously steering the meeting. The room was heavy with tobacco smoke, which only helped to increase the general depression.

A little while ago, an Independence Army company had arrived at an inn in front of Tesheng Gate—they came from the direction of Liuho. The soldiers stacked their arms and stretched out in the rooms, dejected. They lamented that, with their tiny army and hardly any weapons, the prospects for Korean independence were remote indeed. The black-bearded tall deputy company commander wept, as he told a long story about how he had fought under Hong Bom Do, and his men sat and sighed.

Where can we go? Should we just give in to lamentation and despair? Is Korea on the edge of final destruction? Once we fall headlong down the precipice, will our bodies and souls

just vanish into the dark abyss? Is this how a nation that has a meaningful five thousand years' history should meet its end?

The long, dark night was stifling. The days passed, and the months and years. In the blackness of the night, in a century overcast with dark clouds of despair, the people were groping for a way out. But the bruised epoch wound on aimlessly through this hopeless night, this oppressive blackness.

Yet, it was not the end. It could not be.

At this moment, a sleigh was racing across the wilderness towards this walled city. As the driver whipped up his horse, the blizzard, in a frenzied dance across the wilderness, would grab at the horse and sleigh and then race on, wailing.

"Is it still far to Kirin?" The question issued from the sleigh.

"No, not far to go now." The driver answered.

In spite of the ferocious blizzard and the darkness, the driver puffed at his pipe and sparks flew up as if from a flint. The sleigh ran on, leaping up and down the rugged, snow-bound road, crushing wormwood under its runners and raising clouds of snow behind it. The blizzard wailed and wailed and a loud cracking sound came from God knows where.

"What's that?"

"It's the ice breaking on the Sungari River," the driver said as he again applied his whip. The noise of cracking ice was coming nearer. At last the town gate loomed up ahead, the dismal silhouette growing larger and larger. As the gate approached, the horse's hoof-beats echoed as they cantered along the dark surface of the road where snow had blown away. Presently, a corner lifted in the overcast sky and the clouds began to blow away, their torn edges brightening slightly.

A bright star peeped out through the rift in the clouds and shed its light to heaven and on the earth oppressed by the darkness. The star shone over the streets, the snow, even on the wall of the town where the blackness had stubbornly clung on, and over the houses which curled up uncomfortably. The light was beaming over everything as the sleigh reached the town gate.

"Would you rein in the horse?"

As soon as the animal came to a halt, a young man in a dark school uniform stepped off the sleigh. An end of his scarf fluttered in the wind. He hurried up a rise and stood there. His face was uncommonly bright as if spotlighted by the star. He had a very lofty and distinguished air.

"Yes, I must bring day to this place. I will bring a great daybreak here!" He said to himself, in a low voice that held a thousand emotions. His words sounded solemn, like a declaration to the night, to the age of darkness.

But no one knew it as yet. Neither the clouds dispersing in the sky nor the howling snowstorm; neither the gate or wall nor the masses of people who were wakeful, burning to see light; none knew the profound meaning of his words.

But history heard this soft voice echoing through the year of 1927!

It was the harbinger of a new and different storm, of light bursting into a dark world, into a century of confusion. For he was the great sun of revolution, embarking on the salvation of his land and people. Here Comrade Kum Song marked his first step with a great ambition and a new resolve.

2

As the sun rose, it cleared the blackness from the streets of Kirin while a chilly wind blew across the silvery snows.

People bustled in and out of Paek Rak Jin's house, which had received Comrade Kum Song. Many leaders of the Independence Army were gathered in the parlour, among them old Li Gap Mu and Sim Hak, leader of "Chamui-bu" who had arrived in Kirin a few days earlier. There were Chong Min Su, Li Pil Su and So Gun Ha, leaders of "Chongui-bu" as well as young "Sinmin-bu" leaders from northern Manchuria. Seated around Comrade Kum Song, they were as delighted as if they had been meeting the late Kim Hyong Jik. The two old men Sim Hak and Li Gap Mu frequently raised their handkerchiefs to their eyes.

Paek Rak Jin was restless, walking in and out of the room. When he saw his daughter bringing water into the kitchen, he called out to her from the hall to sweep the courtyard and water the flower pots.

"When I see you here, oh how I long for your father. But you are so grown up that he would have had little cause for regret. Though he is gone, he has left a dependable pillar behind him...." Li Gap Mu's voice shook as he said this, and he

wiped his eyes. He again glanced at Comrade Kum Song's intelligent eyes, and asked:

"How is your family? Your mother must be having many troubles."

"She is, indeed, sir."

"Oh, what a hard life!"

The old man shrugged his shoulders and sighed.

"Are your brothers all well?" old Sim Hak asked.

"Yes, sir."

"They must be. If you three brothers grow up sturdily, you can carry out your father's behest."

Sim Hak stroked his beard, happy to see Comrade Kum Song's spirit.

Paek Rak Jin, who had been busily walking in and out of the room, now sat down beside Sim Hak.

"Well, they say you left Hwasong Uisuk School and returned home to launch the movement. Is that true?" Paek Rak Jin queried, putting a cigarette into his ivory holder.

"It's not much of a movement, sir," replied Comrade Kum Song smiling modestly.

"But Pak Yang Suk told me that you had formed an organization, an active movement in and around Fusung."

"Well, she was exaggerating, sir. I've done little that is worth mentioning."

"You may run whatever movement you think best. But why did you leave Hwasong Uisuk? When we recommended you to that school, we had great hopes on you."

"I'll explain the reason later, sir."

Comrade Kum Song was evasive, for any answer he could make would certainly displease these fastidious old men.

"You must, at all costs, live up to our expectations, for then you will be true to your father's behest. You must know that the Korean independence movement is on the wane, so who can shoulder the burden except your generation?" said Paek Rak Jin, sending up a cloud of smoke. He was a candid man, and his face flushed as he spoke.

"I understand, sir," Comrade Kum Song replied respectfully. Though his words were few, his voice and attitude revealed a dignity and power unusual in a youth who had not yet reached twenty. Li Gap Mu nodded with satisfaction, discerning the image of the late Kim Hyong Jik in this extraordinary young man. In the kitchen, too, people talked volubly. Bong Suk's

mother was there among them. Her husband, Li Bong Jin, an Independence Army officer, had been arrested and murdered by the Japanese police. She was as intimate with Kang Ban Sok as if they were sisters-in-law, and she had come here the minute she heard Comrade Kum Song came. She embraced him and cried bitterly for some while, reminded of her husband who had died in prison and of Kim Hyong Jik. She was talking tearfully to Paek Sun Gi's mother.

"When I see her son, I am more anxious to see my sister in Fusung. She is uncommonly generous, you know. Though her family is in dire straits, she is always concerned about her neighbours...she did so much for me when I was in Fusung. But when her husband died last year, I couldn't go there. I felt terrible."

Bong Suk's mother raised the hem of her skirt to her eyes.

"Yours is not the only family she helped. Every family that had any ties with Mr. Kim Hyong Jik is indebted to her. I, too, stayed at her home for some time, while my husband was away in Peking. She has always been concerned about the independence movement, and nothing else. She would tell me that when we finally win independence, we would go to Mangyongdae and farm together...that was her only wish." Paek Sun Gi's mother, too, had kept Kang Ban Sok in her memory: and her eyes filled with tears as she talked about the past.

The two women talked on and on.

Presently Comrade Kum Song came out of the room. He crossed the courtyard and went into the end room of the inner building where Paek Sun Gi, Paek Rak Jin's son, lived.

His arms folded, Paek Sun Gi was walking up and down the room, which was lined with books. His hair was wavy like his father's though unlike him, he was fair and slender.

"You must be very tired after your long journey," said Paek Sun Gi, who was sitting at the desk.

"I rested last night. Don't you go to school?" asked Comrade Kum Song, also sitting down on a chair. Paek Sun Gi was a student at the Law School.

"I am going. But what brought you to Kirin? I wondered why all night, and I still don't know. Why did you leave Hwasong Uisuk to come here?" Paek Sun Gi spoke casually, but his words seemed to carry his troubled thoughts.

"Surely it is not an absolute necessity to study at Hwasong Uisuk. My first impression is that Kirin is a very good place."

"Kirin good? I'm afraid you're mistaken. Of course, Hwasong Uisuk may not really suit people like us. But then, Kirin is little different. We all are supposed to devote ourselves to the independence movement, and what can we learn here? This place is darkness. Everything is in turmoil and everybody is making a hullabaloo, but actually there is nothing going on. Everything seems doomed." Paek Sun Gi's eyelids quivered as he spoke; he was clearly suffering. Now he got up and walked round and round the room. He went up to the glass window that looked out on the backyard and stared gloomily out beyond the ash tree.

"So, I am going to leave Kirin," mumbled Paek Sun Gi as if to himself, looking out.

"Going to leave? I have just come, and you are leaving? As if you are running on with my baton in a relay race? Ha ha ha."

Comrade Kum Song laughed and, flushing, Paek Sun Gi followed suit. Comrade Kum Song thought that Paek had sunk in a state of mind so common in young people these days.

Comrade Kum Song was asking questions, in an endeavour to probe into Paek Sun Gi's innermost heart, when there was a knock on the door and Pak Gwang Sik came into the room. Comrade Kum Song had parted with Pak at Hwasong Uisuk School.

"Oh, I haven't seen you for ages! I heard you were here on my way to school, so I came running." The very excited Pak Gwang Sik grabbed Comrade Kum Song's hand and shook it vigorously.

"How are you getting on?"

"Oh, quite well. As well as ever."

"So, you've already enrolled in a school?"

"I enrolled at Wenkuang Middle School about a week ago. Oh, I'm delighted to see you."

Pak Gwang Sik was a tall youth with high cheekbones. He put his school bag and cap in a corner. He was so happily excited that he was at a loss what to do. Turning to Paek Sun Gi, he asked:

"Don't you go to school, then, Brother Paek?"

"I am going now. How is your father these days?"

"He is not very well, and no medicine seems to help. So he has got so nervous that he grumbles that he will have to go to the other world, instead of returning to the Independence Army."

His father, a former Independence Army officer, was confined to bed with osteomyelitis.

Pak Gwang Sik rubbed his face vigorously with his handkerchief. He grinned and looked at Comrade Kum Song again. He had a round nose, large ears and long thick eyelashes which gave him a tough look.

After a while Paek Sun Gi got up and went off to school.

"Comrade Kum Song, I am very glad that you came so soon. Of course, I knew you would come in January, though.... But I am sorry to say that so far I have failed to do anything. I could have only a few comrades." Pak Gwang Sik said. After Paek Sun Gi had gone he looked suspiciously towards the sliding door that led to the middle room.

"By the way, how are things with Comrade Chang Dok Sun?"

"He hasn't started school yet. He could go to Wenkuang Middle School, but what good is it for both of us to go to the same school? So he is thinking of going to a vocational school or something like that."

Pak Gwang Sik and Chang Dok Sun had been dispatched to Kirin from Hwasong Uisuk School in Huatien by Comrade Kum Song. He had promised to meet the two comrades at Kirin and asked them to acquaint themselves with the situation in Kirin, and then to enrol in schools and to find new comrades there.

Pak Gwang Sik stayed for a long time, reporting how matters stood here in Kirin. In a nutshell, he said, Kirin was a city full of nationalists and factions. He had not known how really to get down to Marxist propaganda and how to gain comrades in a place like this.

Pak said he had attended a few students' meetings, and whenever Marxism was attacked, he clenched fists and trembled, barely able to repress his fury. Comrade Kum Song smiled and said that one could hardly make a revolution with one's fists.

"That's why I controlled myself. But, if we are to start revolution in Kirin, we must first bring down Paek Sun Gi, old Wavy Hair. Look at those books piled up along the walls. All bourgeois philosophers. He reads all that stuff and he is always the first to attack Marxism. And you know he is president of the students' society. So it is very difficult to put real Marxism across to the students. I would say we must start by bringing his kind down."

"He said he would leave here, rather than be defeated."

"They do say so, but I don't think Paek Sun Gi will go anywhere. Where could he go? Hasn't he his father here and considerable nationalist forces? If he were to leave, my, we'd give him a send-off."

Pak Gwang Sik said he felt greatly much happier now that Comrade Kum Song was here. Then he went off to school, promising to come back with Chang Dok Sun in the evening and give a detailed report on the situation in Kirin.

Now Comrade Kum Song walked thoughtfully up and down the room. At times he looked at the books closely packed against the walls which had thrown Paek Sun Gi into his present agony and frustration. It seemed his brains were as close-packed as the bookcases, leaving no room for new ideas.

He wondered what should be done first in this chaotic town.

No sooner had he arrived in Kirin than Comrade Kum Song faced the chaotic reality, and it seemed to invigorate him. He went to the glass window and looked out, as Paek Sun Gi had done. The snow-covered backyard was bright in the sunshine. The snowstorm which had blown with such frenzy had died and only the chirping of sparrows broke the silence. He felt delightfully fresh.

3

The sun threw its warm, gentle rays on the verandah, not a bit like winter. The icicles hanging on the eaves were melting.

Bong Suk, the landlady's daughter, was out on the sunny verandah, playing at keeping house. Tilting her head, she kept rearranging a face-powder box, bottle cap, face-cream container and several other things, all filled with sand.

"Bong Suk, what are these things you've lined up here?" asked Comrade Kum Song, sitting down on the edge of the verandah.

"They are pots. This one is for rice, this one for boiling soup in...."

"And what is this?"

"That's the table."

"Ho ho ho. Then these must be chopsticks and this a spoon, eh...."

With a smile hovering round his lips, he entered Bong Suk's childhood world. The little girl was engrossed in keeping house for a while, when she suddenly called to Comrade Kum Song, and edged up to him, looking to the door. She looked a bit shy, though she was hardly managing to restrain her laughter.

"Shall I tell you a funny story?"

"What story?" he asked, looking as earnest as the girl. Bong Suk gestured to him to be quiet lest her maternal uncle in the room should hear. Then Comrade Kum Song understood what she meant and nodded.

"Uncle," whispered the little girl into his ear.

"You know, yesterday, our cat came running in with a rat in her mouth. It was this big...."

Bong Suk held out her hands to show how big.

"Then what happened?"

"Uncle beat the cat with his pencil-box. So she got mad; her eyes grew this big and she pounced."

Bong Suk drew circles round her eyes with her fingers.

"Gosh, did she bite him, then?"

"She did. And scratched him too.... So Uncle shrieked and opened the door and ran for it."

"Ho ho ho...."

"Uncle, do you think my uncle is weaker than the cat?"

"Better ask your uncle. When nobody is around...."

"I won't talk to him. He always scolds me, and calls me, 'hussy'."

Comrade Kum Song laughed again and, putting his arms round her, he rose to his feet.

"Now, Bong Suk, let's sing that song. You can sing it, can't you?"

"I forgot it." Bong Suk smiled, put her forefinger into her mouth and blushed. Her cheeks were rosy. And Comrade Kum Song was suddenly reminded of his younger brothers at home. Yong Ju's eyes are just as beautiful as hers, he thought.

"Shall we sing together?" suggested Comrade Kum Song, stroking Bong Suk's cheeks.

"Yes."

"Pull your finger out of your mouth."

"He he he."

Comrade Kum Song drew her shoulders to him and sang a song with her.

*I sat and picked reeds by the waterside
Wove a raft to sail over the deep
To carry the hungry and poor on the tide
To a land where nobody weeps.*

The girl's high voice and Comrade Kum Song's deep voice blended and floated on the fresh morning air.

Comrade Kum Song had been staying at Paek Rak Jin's, but as soon as he enrolled at Yuwen Middle School, he had moved to Bong Suk's house. He had loved her from the very first day he met her. After school he sat her at his desk to teach her to write. After each lesson he taught her songs. Now Bong Suk was able to recite the Korean alphabet with ease and to sing quite well.

Bong Suk sang after him for a while, and as she became familiar with the words and music, she climbed out of his embrace and sang by herself, clapping her hands. He clapped hands too, to help her.

At this moment the main gate opened and Bong Suk's mother came in, carrying a deep bowl of bean sprouts on the head. She stood listening to her daughter's song, holding the vessel on her head.

"Bong Suk is doing quite well now."

Bong Suk was startled, ran to Comrade Kum Song, and hid behind him, saying:

"I won't sing in front of mama."

"My goodness, what a little ninny to be shy of your own mother."

"Ho ho ho. Don't worry. Bong Suk will sing a song for you and gladden you." Comrade Kum Song said this with a gentle smile and patted the girl's rosy cheeks. Bong Suk's mother felt her eyes dim with tears. Since her husband's death she had endured many hardships and sorrows, eking out a living in this harsh, merciless world. Whenever she was hard pressed, she thought of her dead husband, reminding herself to live on with courage and to be faithful to the cause to which her husband had been dedicated. But nobody had understood or sympathized with her. And now, Comrade Kum Song tried to make her happy and cheerful; and though tearful, she was grateful

to him, feeling as if she saw something in him of the unique personality of the late Kim Hyong Jik.

"Of course, she'll sing well; for you are her teacher," said the mother as she put the vessel of bean sprouts down on the verandah.

"Isn't Dong Ho in?"

"He is inside," replied Comrade Kum Song, "reading a book."

"Why does he always read books, day and night?"

"It is good to read books, Aunt. We must read and read."

"I know. Her father used to read just like him. When we were married he was only a boy of 16, but he used to put on a scholar's hat and always read the *Four Books* and *Three Classics*. I would bring a bowl of water into his room, but he never took his eyes off his book. Sometimes, he would lock the door so that I could not get in. And, oh, the way he read! He did not mumble to himself like Dong Ho. He read aloud. 'Confucius said..., Mencius said....'"

Bong Suk's mother's voice sounded sad, as she remembered her dead husband. In an endeavour to dispel her sorrow, he forced a smile and said, "And I'm sure he read shaking his shoulders."

"Yes, he did. They read books that way in old days. Then he joined the independence movement, and after he met Brother in Fusung, he always carried and read modern books. He no longer read aloud then, just with his eyes, as Dong Ho does. I suppose that's because they were modern books."

By Brother in Fusung she meant Kim Hyong Jik. Li Bong Jin, father of Bong Suk, was member of the Korean National Association formed by Kim Hyong Jik and fought bravely for the liberation of their country.

While in Linchiang and Pataokou, Comrade Kum Song often used to see Li Bong Jin, a short stocky man, visiting his father. Sometimes, he stayed at his home for days, talking with his father, and at night would go out together. Once he saw a huge crate, obviously smuggled in from abroad, being shipped off to an unknown destination on a horse-driven sleigh carrying bundles of tobacco leaves. Li Bong Jin went along, to take care of the shipment. It seemed that the crate contained some weapons. And then in Fusung, Li Bong Jin had lived next door to him.

As his father and Li Bong Jin became more intimate, so did their wives. The two couples had been very close, just like

brothers- and sisters-in-law. And last spring, Li Bong Jin's family had moved to Kirin; the year his father died.

Afterwards, the other family suffered the same misfortune: Just a month after Kim Hyong Jik's death, Li Bong Jin was captured and killed by the Japs while active in the homeland. This had bound the two families still closer. Many letters of condolence passed between Fusung and Kirin. It was because of this deep-rooted affection that Bong Suk's mother stubbornly insisted that Comrade Kum Song must stay at her home, not at Paek Rak Jin's as had been decided.

After Bong Suk's mother entered the kitchen, Sin Dong Ho, Bong Suk's uncle, opened the door and came out onto the verandah. He was a plump young man. He went down into the yard and raised himself on the iron bar. Whenever he stretched his thick legs up into the air, jerking back his head, Bong Suk laughed, clapping her hands. His face flushed after intensive exercise, he picked up his towel and went to wash.

Kirin was a students' city. In the mornings the streets were crowded with them. The pavements were made of wooden boards laid across a deep gutter on either side of the rickshaw and carriage way. They were packed with students, as they came or left the town. There was such a flood of students going out of the town through Hsinkai Gate that they looked like water flowing out of a broken dam. The students swept along all the main streets such as Peita Street, Honan Street and Tungtien Street, looking lively as they walked and talked. They discussed problems left unsolved despite painstaking effort through the night and ideas that they had come across in books. And the central topics that always excited them were the times, and the problem of how the students should act to meet the need of the times. Last night there had been a gathering to discuss this very problem, and the debate continued on the way to schools.

A student claimed that it was metaphysical to define this era as an era of civilization, an era of progress and that modern civilization had degraded man and made not even a tiny contribution to human society. This student was accompanied by a friend with a bulging school bag of books in his hand and several large volumes under his arm, who jerked up his pimpled face, and announced: "We are living in this terrible, this unhappy age, an age convulsing to produce something new, and it is ridiculous to bother with all these stories of chivalry, patriotic

warriors, and what not. It is little different from the Buddhist monk who tries to bring rain with prayer, burning himself in flames. Who, then, is the real midwife of the new age? She is politics, only politics, indeed...."

But the pimply student's fiery speech was swallowed up by other voices. Theories developed into debate, and debate into heated arguments. Incoherent arguments turned into ambiguous assertions. Anyhow, all the students had great dreams. Everybody stuck to his argument and roared as if he held the times and the world in his sway. They were but fledgling heroes yet. But it was not necessary to be disappointed in their weak wings. These fledglings, through their energetic advance, would in time be trained to flap about in space, and finally, with the strengthened wings and tails, strike at the door of a new world and fly freely across the blue canopy of the times.

Waves of students surged along Niumahang Street, too. Many of them came from Tesheng Gate direction. This street, too, seethed with noisy students from various schools.

Comrade Kum Song was among these students. Sin Dong Ho came along and walked on, reciting to himself *Self-portrait*, which he left unfinished last night:

*On to the shore of the lake of agonizing dreams
You miserable pebble, white with the moss of passion
Were mercilessly thrown...*

Sin Dong Ho sought inspiration to complete his poem in this cauldron. He walked on along his illusionary lake, trying to whisper to the grass and water.

When he got to the school, Comrade Kum Song hurried past the tennis court and went into his classroom. It was silent. The noise in the school grounds was remote.

There was not a speck of dust in the classroom. The desk tops had been polished with dry rags until they shone. The blackboard showed traces of the Pythagoras theorem and a right-angled triangle drawn by the geometry teacher at yesterday's lesson. Comrade Kum Song sat down on his chair and meditated for a few moments before he quickly opened the bag and took out *Das Capital* to read. He had almost finished the chapter on Surplus Value, when the class thronged into the room for the first lesson which would soon begin. The room

became noisy. The teachers always demanded silence in the classroom, but they laughed and always made a lot of noise boxing and jostling each other.

"He's coming!" One of the students raised his hand and shouted. This was the warning signal and instantly there was a complete hush in the room.

The first lesson was world history. The history teacher had a trimmed moustache and neatly combed hair, and using his own plan, he made energetic efforts to teach the history of ancient Korea. Half-closing his eyes and standing upright with both his hands laid gently on the desk, he explained the lives of the ancient Koreans characterized by God-worshipping.

"So the ancient Korean state backed on white mountains behind with the Arisu River at the front, and all the land and air showed the benevolence of Providence."

The teacher's voice was quiet but firm.

"Worshipping these mountains and the sacred river, they lived out their God-centred lives. For example...."

He made a short pause and wiped his flushed cheeks and the tip of his nose with his handkerchief.

The students were listening to him very attentively.

"For example, there was an annual holiday, a day that the whole nation would celebrate with various recreations; men would hold archery matches and women weaving competitions. Major national policies were decided and any important trials held. Thus they expressed their gratitude to God and promoted brotherhood among the clans and kept their society united. The holiday also gave people opportunities to improve their skills and culture. Attention should be paid to the spiritual driving force of the people in those days when all the national trials and grand celebrations were held in the presence of God. It was, indeed, an era when life was purified by worship."

Quoting an abundance of facts the teacher read his lecture with a serious attitude. He used fine rhetoric to embellish his phrases, reasoned dexterously and at times built up a vivid picture for the students. He enabled the students to see the lives of the ancient Koreans and their talents and skills. When the main lecture was over and the students could ask questions, Choe Jin Guk, a short, stocky boy with small eyes rose abruptly.

"I have a question, sir."

The teacher nodded, leaning against the desk with his hands.

"Sir, your today's lecture has helped me understand how the ancient Koreans worshipped God. But this has raised quite a few questions. I wonder, were the lives of the God-worshipping people really so idyllic, and if they were, why have we driven their God out of our lives?"

"That is an odd question. The knowledge that their God-fearing lives were wonderful is not based on mere historical data. We should learn history from the standpoint of admiring our history, our own forefathers. You must think of the life of the ancient from this standpoint. But you seem to be utterly lacking this standpoint. That is why you have said such a queer thing—about our having driven God away from our present life."

"Then, sir, do you mean that God exists in our lives today?"

"You must not take God too literally. I think you would do better to interpret God as the spirit of life. However complicated our reality, we should emulate our forefathers' spirit of life that we have inherited through history."

Choe Jin Guk sat down, unable to think of any further comment.

"Do ask. Don't hesitate to ask questions if you have any."

Comrade Kum Song rose to his feet.

"May I ask a question, sir?"

"Go ahead."

"I would like to know about the structure of state administration in ancient Korea. If God-worshipping prevailed in the life of the ancients, there must be some traces left of the state structure of that time."

"The administration structure? Well, I won't say that there isn't any data, but we have not yet collected enough to describe it systematically. But what makes you ask such a question?"

Comrade Kum Song noted that the teacher's voice was strained, but he did not think that this question should be passed over. He was interested in production relations and state power in ancient Korea. But what was more important was that he must not be indifferent to the fact that the teacher, from his idealistic view of history, was endeavouring to ram an utterly mistaken understanding of history down the students' throats.

"In my opinion, the rulers at the time used God, religion, as a means for repressing and exploiting the people. Therefore, I am inclined to think that in those days state power must have had some official posts that dealt with God-worshipping."

"Religion as a means of repression and exploitation? What ever do you mean?"

The teacher's voice began to quaver.

Comrade Kum Song watched the change in the teacher's face and continued calmly.

"Sir, I agree with your view that we must treasure our history, the records of our forefathers' lives. However, we cannot approve of every aspect: we must not allow ourselves to sink in history. If the life led by the ancient people were so wonderful and beautiful, why did history negate their society? I think that it is unjust to deceive people with a non-existent God and subordinate them with His authority. And certainly as production developed and science progressed, the rulers, sons and grandsons of God, could not maintain their positions, and those who had more land and slaves came to rule the people using greater force. If one cannot see this even through the facts, it means that one loves history to a point of addiction, doesn't it? We must not drowse in history, but must learn the law of social evolution from history and advance this society. So I am asking about the state machine in order to understand the relationship between the ruling and the ruled, which is concealed in the God-worshipping life."

"Um...."

The teacher groaned and was petrified. His chin quivered perceptibly.

Comrade Kum Song wanted to refer to the essence of the state and stress that, in the last analysis, the state, whatever veil it put on, was the means by which the ruling classes oppressed and exploited the ruled and that, accordingly, one must not absolutize the state; but, as he saw the teacher's face contracted as if he was going to collapse, he did not press it any further. He sat down. And, indeed, the history teacher felt like awaking from sleep. Intuitively he thought that from among his students there had appeared a boy, a prodigy, whom he could not ignore. As soon as the bell rang, he wound up his lesson and hastened out of the classroom.

This teacher's pen name was Glacier. He had specialized in history for many years. He was well versed in Asian history, particularly Korean and Chinese. As a young man he had visited many parts of Asia in his bast-sandals, bamboo stick in hand, to track down traces of the evolution of the yellow races. He had written several books on ancient history.

When Glacier reached the staff room, Wang Hsi-tung, in sports gear, was exercising with dumbbells. He always did this because drill was never the first lesson. Wang was a tall, broad-shouldered man with a sand-paper chin. He appeared to be twice as heavy as Glacier.

"You are the first to finish, eh?" said Wang, jerking his eight-pound dumbbells up and down.

Glacier cast a glance in his direction but did not speak. He sat down heavily in his armchair, pulled out his handkerchief and kept wiping his forehead.

What sort of student could he be, Glacier thought to himself. His question was extraordinary. He is asking me about a quite different thing. He seems to see through the essence of the matter anyhow.

"Mr. Glacier, you would do well to do these exercises, too, if you want to live long."

"I'm afraid I can't even stand up with those things," Glacier said, rather dismally. He did not know why, but it seemed to him that the shock he had received in the classroom was being replaced by his displeasure at the sight of Wang's muscles that looked as though they might burst through his clothes at any moment. All his life Glacier's mind had been as quiet as a pond without a ripple, but today he had an urge to vent his rage and throw the ashtray at the well-built Wang.

Glacier closed his eyes. But calm eluded him—he could not forget Comrade Kum Song's question.

Why didn't I manage to answer his question? Glacier asked himself. He said I was addicted to history; a sharp criticism of my whole life! I have devoted all my life to studying history, but I haven't gone beyond collecting up records found by others. Have I established my own identity in my study? My historical viewpoint has been infirm, sometimes falling into dualism....

Glacier got up from his armchair and paced up and down the room. He did not know why, but he had an urge to talk to Comrade Kum Song.

During a break Glacier called Comrade Kum Song into his room. He stared for many moments at Comrade Kum Song. He did indeed make an extraordinary impression. A smile lingered around the corners of his eyes and his closed mouth.

"How much history have you studied?"

"Not much, sir."

"But you seem to know a lot about it."

"Not at all, sir. I am only trying hard to learn, sir."

"You must study hard, of course. But what are you going to specialise in?"

"I have not yet decided, sir."

"Um...."

Glacier lit a cigarette, still staring at Comrade Kum Song.

"I dwelt on the worship of God today, in my lecture on the life of ancient Koreans. What do you think about religions in general, including primitive religions?"

"I have no particular thoughts about them. I didn't think your lecture was based on the assumption that God exists. I understood that you gave us facts contained in records, from the standpoint of treasuring history. Religion was made by the people in the dark ages as something to rely on spiritually as they were unable to recognize the world and felt impotent before nature, wasn't it?"

"You are right. That's the point. I see that the same way. You are right, indeed."

Comrade Kum Song only smiled.

"What books are you reading these days?"

"I don't read many books, because I can't get them."

"What kind of books do you want?"

"I want to read any books that are useful to us young people in our development."

"Come to my house. I have some books. I don't know if you will find readable ones, though...."

"Thank you, sir."

After a while Comrade Kum Song left the room. Glacier had firmly shaken his hand, and repeatedly invited him to his house for books. His anxious frame of mind was gone, and he felt calm and broad like a pond in spring.

Outside the teachers' room Comrade Kum Song ran into Choe Jin Guk who had been waiting for him. Choe asked him why Glacier had called him.

"He didn't say anything particular. He said he had some books and I may borrow them."

"Oh, I see. Mr. Glacier looked somewhat displeased when I asked my question. He is not the kind of man who is particular about our questions. He is a very good man. He is too simple and honest, and that may well be his trouble. But anyhow, he has never ridden in a rickshaw. When we ask him why he does not

ride the rickshaw, he says it is not good to ride in it, because it makes men lazy and slack. It is man's duty to use his hands and feet, he says. Where Wang Hsi-tung, the drill instructor, is a bat, Mr. Glacier is a crane. By the way, be careful of that Wang. He is a secret agent sent here by the Police Department."

Comrade Kum Song looked smilingly at the short, stocky friend. He looked like a simple-hearted young peasant who had just run out of the field he was tilling. His small yellow eyes were always smiling.

"How do you know Wang Hsi-tung is a secret agent?"

"I know it. Why don't I know? He watches the students day and night to see if they read Marxian literature. But however much he watches, the bat cannot prevent new trends of thought from penetrating." Choe Jin Guk said excitedly, looking carefully around him.

Comrade Kum Song thought that this student must be reading Marxist literature or being influenced more or less by progressive thought.

That day after school he went out into the street with Choe Jin Guk to get to know him better. Choe Jin Guk walked close by his side and talked with fervour about his family. His father had worked for many years at the Kirin Railway Bureau as a worker, but he had been dismissed and was now working at the Sungari River wharf. His family was so poor that Choe had decided to stop learning after primary school. But his father insisted that he must get a middle school education, and said he would somehow find the fees. So he had entered Yuwen Middle School. He gave a picture of how his father persuaded him.

"Look, Brick (Choe Jin Guk's nickname). What do you mean that you don't want to go to middle school? An educated man can tell right from wrong, as a saying goes. I can't understand you. I deeply regret that I have been unlettered all my life. And you want to stop after primary school? You want to take over the sweat-soaked carrying rack and work like a beast? If you want that, go to the wharf and carry firewood then. Go."

He mimicked his father wielding a fist. So, on his father's strict orders, Choe Jin Guk enrolled at Yuwen Middle School. His drollery made Comrade Kum Song laugh aloud. He decided that he had met a good friend.

"Well, have you read any Marxist books?"

"I have read a few, but I am not clever enough to understand them fully and I don't remember much."

"How can you hope to understand them at one reading? By the way, are there many students who study Marxism here in Kirin?"

"Quite a few, I think."

"And don't they have any organisation?"

"I don't think they have. It is difficult to set up an organisation because of the nationalist forces."

"Let us meet often now, and discuss and study together. When we have questions we shall discuss them. Marxism is a profound science, and you cannot grasp it if you simply read the books as a pastime." Saying this, Comrade Kum Song went off towards Niumahang Street, accompanied by Choe Jin Guk.

4

In the daytime, the Kirin students sat in front of the black-board like lambs, but in the evening they led a completely different life. Meetings, discussions and lectures were held in many places. There the students talked big, discussed politics and advocated their various isms. Ideologies of all hues clashed in great confusion.

One evening Comrade Kum Song went to Youth House with Paek Sun Gi. The house was crowded with students who were members of the students' society. As he went in, Pak Gwang Sik and Chang Dok Sun who were already there greeted him silently with their eyes.

Chang Dok Sun was a husky youth; he was calm and his way of thinking was different from Pak Gwang Sik's. On the night of the day when Comrade Kum Song arrived in Kirin he had made a substantial report on the situation in the town, which was different from that made by Pak Gwang Sik. He had said that he would enter the Vocational School at any cost. He said that it was only when we drew the stronger-willed students from the school in our fold, would we be able to disseminate Marxism quickly.

Comrade Kum Song sat down in the back row to avoid his friends.

That evening there was a lecture in Youth House. The lecturer was a man called Kwon Sim who was said to have come

from Seoul a few months ago. He was tall and slender with thick-rimmed glasses on his long face. His tone was fiery from the start, his subject: "Whither Korean Youth."

"The Korean people have lost their way now. Since the March the First Movement the Japanese imperialists have bound Korea and stifled the Korean people by more cruel and crafty methods, in the name of 'cultured government'. The groans of our oppressed compatriots are ringing in our ears. We hear their voices asking where they should go. Who then must save this nation? Students, it is you. You must shoulder this heavy responsibility to our nation and our time."

Comrade Kum Song listened to the lecture attentively. Paek Sun Gi was president of the students' society, so he took the chair at the rostrum and listened to the lecture, occasionally brushing back his wavy hair with his hand. A little apart from Paek Sun Gi there were a few chairs separated from the audience, occupied by students' society officers. On the first chair sat Chae Gyong who had invited this evening's lecturer. Like Paek Sun Gi, he was at the Law School. He had a more developed constitution than Paek, and his markedly high cheekbone made him look severe.

There were girl students, too. Gyong Ju, younger sister of Chae Gyong, was among them, looking to the rostrum. A round-faced girl, she looked with some aloofness at the lecturer for a while and at times looked at Paek Sun Gi and her brother.

"...You must choose the right road for our nation and carve out its destiny along that road. What then is the right road to take? It is the road of truth in the truest sense of the word, the only right road. For without that we cannot solve the question of our nation's fate completely. Of course, ours is one nation. However, in solving this question, we must not think of the nation and try to solve it, proceeding from the vague and abstract concept we have hitherto entertained—that we are one nation. We must take off the purple veil and look into the true features of our nation and what exists within our nation; we must delve into the specific aspects of the nation from this angle. Only then can we realize that our nation is not a mere nation and that it is intertwined with the most serious class contradictions."

Paek Sun Gi raised his flushed face and cast a glance on Kwon Sim. There was a stir among quite a few students who changed their sitting attitudes.

"Be quiet!" Shouts came from here and there. Kwon Sim

continued his speech.

"If these class contradictions are left as they are, it is impossible to find the solution for the question of our nation's destiny. What are the intertwining class contradictions? People are bled white and dying on one hand and on the other, great edifices are built with glue made of their sweat and blood, in which the rich are well-fed and well-dressed...."

"Just a moment, sir. I have a question to ask." A student interrupted the speech, rising to his feet.

"Go ahead and ask," said Kwon Sim, pouring water into a glass with a slightly trembling hand, his glasses reflecting dazzling light.

"What are you going to tell us, sir? Are you going to propagate Marx's theory of surplus value? If so, we don't want to hear it."

"Don't want to hear?" uttered the lecturer abstractedly, quite taken aback and staring at the student.

"Why should we take such a road? Why should we take the road to class struggle? You mean that the workers must oppose the capitalists and the tenants must oppose the landlords?"

"Hear, hear. We must not allow such a struggle among our nation," said another student, rising from his seat. The face of Kwon Sim, who had been delivering the lecture, turned pale. He took off his glasses and wiped them. Now, students started rising up here and there. It was communist advocates' turn to make their passionate assertions.

"You try to look at the nation only, without seeing the class contradictions. In the final analysis, this is an attempt to ruin the future of our nation. Whatever you say, Marx's idea is truth. Because it is truth, it cannot be covered up with any sophistry or ignorance or prejudice." The oval-faced and flat-nosed Cho Chang Jin from Wenkuang Middle School, roared wielding his fist.

"Comrade Wol Pa Junior is right!"

"Look, don't call me Wol Pa Junior. That is an insult to Mr. Wol Pa." Cho Chang Jin warned angrily the student who had risen to support him. This usually roused a burst of laughter, but nobody laughed now. In fact, Cho Chang Jin swaggered about as a Marxist; he was under the influence of Wol Pa and Choe Gon, members of the executive committee of the "General Bureau of the Korean Communist Party in Manchuria". Hence his friends called him "Wol Pa Junior".

"Then I withdraw the expression. Comrade Cho is right. Your claims are ridiculous slanders against truth. If you were free of prejudice and had an iota of knowledge about Marxism, you would not make such statements."

"Shut up. We have read Marxist books, too."

"But if you don't understand the truth they tell, then you are idiots."

The temperature of the meeting rose to boiling point. Students got up on all sides, shaking clenched fists. Pak Gwang Sik, too, wanted to jump up and speak, but he did not get the chance. Some students rolled their books and struck the palms of their hands.

Paek Sun Gi rose to his feet, stroking back his hair. The audience calmed down a bit.

"Please be quiet. Let me say a few words. Sir, I am sorry to say, but if you want to do Marxian propaganda this evening, you might as well stop your lecture. There are plenty of Marxist books here in Kirin. Lots of them, which no one reads. So anyone who wants to know about Marxism, can find books; we need not to trouble ourselves with a lecture."

"You and your kind may say so, but we need the lecture." Chae Gyong cut Paek Sun Gi short. He had been holding himself in check, but he rose because it was Paek who spoke.

"You claim that there are plenty of Marxist books in Kirin. That's nonsense. But even if there were mountains of them, what is wrong with hearing a lecture on Marxism? At present Marxism is sweeping the world like the spring wind, melting the ice wall of class society. Why then should Koreans alone turn away from this wind of truth? You, Paek Sun Gi, may turn away, but we will not."

"Then you mean Marxism is suitable to us? Marx's work which analysed the European situation, was written in the 19th century."

"Don't be so ignorant. Science gets to the essence of individual phenomena through the general. Mere enumeration of individual phenomena is not science. You think that Marx's theory only applies to the countries from which he drew his illustrations, and does not apply to others? How can you, who call yourself an intellectual, make that claim?"

A heated argument developed between Chae Gyong and Paek Sun Gi, and soon both were shaking their fists.

"Mr. Kwon Sim, carry on with your lecture, please," shouted

Gyong Ju, sister of Chae Gyong, rising to her feet.

But the lecturer could not hear her because her voice was drowned in the noise; and he put a cigarette in his mouth. He wasted several matches, trying to get the light to the right place.

"Please carry on with the lecture, sir. We want to hear it," shouted Gyong Ju again. Cigarette between his lips, Kwon Sim rubbed his face with his pocket handkerchief and came down from the rostrum. He picked up his walking cane which stood against the wall in a corner and walked out.

Gyong Ju bit her lip, her eyes full of tears. Paek Sun Gi and Chae Gyong continued their debate which focussed the attention of the excited audience. Chang Dok Sun made an attempt to say a few words but gave up. He thought Kwon Sim's remarks on the national question had been too radical, but he was afraid his criticism would, in the long run, support the nationalist-minded youth. Presently, the meeting ended and the students surged out of the house. They kept arguing while they flocked out. They were in an utter confusion, each one passionately pouring out his own assertion.

One of the students shouted that communism was only concerned with classes, and what was the point of learning that. Then the tall Pak Gwang Sik stretched his hand over other students and grabbed his shoulder.

"Why do you say communism is only concerned with classes? Tell us."

"Hear, hear. Ask him. How is nationalism destroying the Korean independence movement? Tell us that first."

A group of students surrounded the student Pak Gwang Sik had grabbed and pressed him hard. But as he was jostled hither and thither, amid the surging waves of students, Pak Gwang Sik's hand lost hold of his opponent's shoulder. He sought the lost student, twitching his nostrils. But this student had made for one of the dimly lit street lamps where he took off his cap and waved it and shouted out a few incoherent remarks before he fled into the dark. The students roared to him to stop, but he was soon out of sight. For quite a while there was a tumult in the usually dark Niumahang Street.

Youth House was deserted now but Comrade Kum Song remained seated. He sunk in deep thought, with a lowered head.

Paek Sun Gi who had debated hotly with Chae Gyong paced by the rostrum, still gasping, unable to control his rage. He felt thirsty, took the pitcher on the desk and drank a glass of

water, before he went over to Comrade Kum Song.

"Why don't you go?"

But Comrade Kum Song did not reply. Paek Sun Gi looked at him rather shame-facedly.

Presently, Comrade Kum Song stood up without a word and opened the nearest window. Countless stars twinkled in the dark sky. Looking up into the sky, he wiped his forehead.

"This is Kirin. Day and night they wrangle over nationalism and communism," said Paek Sun Gi.

Comrade Kum Song still did not say a word. Looking up at a shooting star falling over the Sungari River, he heard a big sigh. Only then Paek Sun Gi realized that he was grave because of this evening's meeting. Paek walked up and down in Youth House, occasionally stealing looks at his back.

Comrade Kum Song was very sad. The uproar he had seen this evening cut him to the heart.

Paek Sun Gi says this is Kirin, thought Comrade Kum Song, speaking as if he were an outsider. He looks ashamed of tonight's uproar and his extreme remarks. Able to judge the situation with reason and to feel a pang of conscience, why then did he go wild and wield his fists? Paek is not the only one who behaves that way. There was so much noise that it was hardly possible to find any reason. It is true that Kwon Sim's lecture went off track. According to Chang Dok Sun's report, Kwon is a conscientious Communist who came here from Seoul to make revolution, but he, too, has radical views on the national question. The Korean revolution demands class emancipation after national liberation, and his nihilistic attitude on the national question is wrong. He started with such ultra-leftist, nihilistic claims, that there were accusations against communism, that it is only concerned with classes and he was chased out almost as soon as he began to speak. So much for that, but the sponsors were so engrossed in hitting at each other that they gave no thought of coping with the general disorder. As a result, many people wasted time and energy, and spent the evening to no purpose. Isn't it a sad reality? At a time when the enemy has torn down our fence and broken into the yard, why are the young people of this country fighting like this? Isn't it we young people who should be the vanguard? Nobody can claim that he is right. Since there were no right methods, it became impossible to tell right from wrong. What a mess!

Comrade Kum Song felt a lot about this evening's commo-

tion. Having witnessed that wild scene, he felt that he was gradually getting a clearer idea of where to start, what to deal with first in order to prepare the forces of Korean revolution.

Comrade Kum Song went over to Paek Sun Gi who was still pacing thoughtfully. He sat down on a chair and asked: "Are you really going somewhere else to study?"

This question had been discussed between them more than once.

"I did intend to go to Shanghai," said Paek Sun Gi, sitting beside Comrade Kum Song.

"Your father tells you to go home?"

"Yes, he does. He is dead against my going to Shanghai. He said he had no money to send me to Shanghai, and asked me what was the use of going over to the so-called 'Provisional Government'. He advised me to go to Seoul, because there are many friends of his there who would help me with the fees. But I still think I should go to Shanghai."

As Paek Sun Gi finished, Comrade Kum Song said quietly. "I am not going to waste a lot of time on the preliminaries. Let's be frank. You want to go to Shanghai to wash away the mess you have got here. But if Shanghai did have anything, Kirin would not be in this mess. If you are really seeking a road to Korea's independence, not just going sightseeing, don't go there. We must not try to find or borrow ideas from elsewhere, we must form them for ourselves. As for how matters stand with the 'Provisional Government in Shanghai' and the nationalist movement there, I think Mr. Paek Rak Jin's estimate is correct."

"I expected you would say that. But if everybody started forming what you call the idea of the independence movement, what would happen?" Paek Sun Gi replied coldly. He was not willing to speak frankly from the start.

But Comrade Kum Song did not worry, and said:

"The majority of people will come to the same idea in the end. Because the Korean revolution can be achieved only through one idea. Other ideas are sham. The problem is that people must be freed from these false ideas as soon as possible."

"And who will choose that one right idea? And if each has his own idea, how is it possible to unite them into a single idea?" Paek Sun Gi asked in the same indifferent tone.

But Comrade Kum Song continued just as calmly.

"The problem will be solved by the Korean situation and the demands of the times. Even though we have different points

of departure, we all live in the same age, with the same reality. If we are truly patriotic, love our nation and are deeply concerned for our country's destiny, we must all finally arrive at the same idea. In the long run, the idea of the independence movement offers solutions to problems raised by our country and our age. Concerned with the same problems, we will arrive at the same conclusions. That much is obvious."

Paek Sun Gi wanted to object, but could find no answer to Comrade Kum Song's flawless logic.

"We should dedicate ourselves to the independence movement," continued Comrade Kum Song. "So I give you my sincere advice: Don't go to Shanghai. Go to the homeland as your father asked. We are dedicated to Korean independence, and if we are ignorant of our own country, we cannot move a forward step. We must first grasp reality in our country; we must know what the country is suffering from, what it demands, the misery in which our fellow countrymen are living and their desires. You should hear the voices of our downtrodden brothers. You should hear other people's views, you should know who are truly grieved at the country's destiny and trying to free her from the iron chains.... Unless you look straight into this reality, you cannot find the right road."

"From what you have said, I can guess you are Communist. And I think I can understand what you mean."

"I won't take the trouble to cover up what I am. I am sure our ideas will be united sooner or later. As long as we base ourselves on our country's reality, there cannot be two roads."

"But I don't want to become Communist," said Paek Sun Gi and jumped to his feet.

"You needn't try for a hasty conclusion."

"You can't say the country's reality is the only reality," cried out Paek Sun Gi in a trembling voice.

"Ha ha ha. But for us who love the country, there can be no reality more precious. I don't think you don't realise this, but I do think you should chew it over."

Comrade Kum Song came out into the street with Paek Sun Gi. Paek walked silently, coldly. Comrade Kum Song did not speak again as they went down the moonlit street.

The window was whitening. There was the sound of the doors opening and shutting in the main building and the whimpering of a child was heard. Day broke. Kwon Sim had not had a wink of sleep all night. His supersensitive nerves seemed to have received too heavy a blow. He had been haunted by the unpleasant scene at the lecture. The feverish eyes, those shouting would-be heroes who would not listen to each others' arguments—the scene was quite unlike his expectations. Why the hell did Chae Gyong entice me to that damned place, he thought.

Chae Gyong had said: "All the students are anxious to hear you speak. They are aspiring at communism, this is their trend here."

Did last night's scene show a trend of the students aspiring for communism? Never....

Kwon Sim got out of bed, his head aching. He put on his glasses and looked for his cigarette case. There was only one cigarette left. He had smoked the whole night and the ashtray was full of cigarette ends. He could not stop smoking, though he had to eat gruel every other day because of stomach trouble. He lit the cigarette and picked up the Engels book he had put aside.

He read a few lines when he heard an unfamiliar voice calling to him from outside. He got up quickly and opened the door. A student stood in the yard, a slender youth with serene smiling eyes.

"Excuse me for coming to you so early in the morning."

"Who are you?"

"I am a student at Yuwen Middle School. I came to see you, sir."

"Come in, please."

Kwon Sim ushered Comrade Kum Song into the room. He folded his bedding and pushed it into a corner and asked the visitor to take a seat.

"I heard your lecture at Youth House last night," said Comrade Kum Song, taking his seat.

"Oh, did you?" Kwon Sim's face flushed crimson. If he had heard his lecture and was paying this early morning visit, maybe

he wanted to discuss some points on which he disagreed. Kwon Sim looked at the student's face. But he had such a gentle expression and reverent attitude.

"I was told that you are in poor health. Did you get some sleep last night, sir?"

"Yes, thank you."

"You look very tired, sir. What are you suffering from?"

"I have stomach trouble. I am in pain from time to time. But I am feeling quite all right at present."

Kwon Sim took off his glasses and wiped them mechanically. He was so grateful to the student for inquiring after his health.

"When did you come from Seoul?"

"A couple of months ago," replied Kwon Sim as nonchalantly as ever. There was that shadow of loneliness about him, which one feels in an alien land.

Kwon Sim had graduated from a college in Seoul and had devoured Marxist literature, though he had never taken part in the socialist movement. He had contributed many articles to the press, working as a teacher and journalist. Then the Japanese police had started taking an interest, and he had come into Kirin, bringing all his books with him. Books lined all the walls of the two rooms where he now lived. They said he had brought three wagonloads of books from the railway station. He seldom left his book mountain. He read books and wrote articles at the desk on which lay a pocket watch with a nickel chain, alongside an ashtray and a cigarette case. He lamented over the lack of theory, for which he said the Korean revolution did not develop.

Referring to last night's lecture, Comrade Kum Song said he was afraid Kwon Sim had made a mistake in walking out without finishing his lecture.

"There was a great commotion in the audience, but you should not have walked out, sir."

Though Kwon Sim had made an ultra-leftist speech yesterday, Comrade Kum Song saw him as an intellectual with whom he could work, so he did his best to avoid touching on the contents of his speech now, and steered the conversation into different channels.

"Ha ha. You are rather idealistic.... Do you think last night's confusion could have been overcome by the strength of patience and they could have acknowledged truth?"

"Well, we are Communists who are resolved to set the

chaotic society to right through revolution. Isn't it too pessimistic for us to think it impossible to cope with the confusion at a meeting?"

"But how could I continue with my lecture? If I had, I'm sure I would have been stoned, you know. I am not inclined to make public speeches, and I have never seen such a confusion as last night. They are students, are supposed to seek truth, and I can't understand why they behaved like that."

"But you have to be tolerant, sir. If we Communists are intolerant, the masses won't be united in our embrace, will they? If you are a true Communist, you should not view the confusion of last night in isolation, but should know how to find truth in the voices of the masses. As a whole your lecture was good, but as for the national question which caused the confusion, I believe you should reconsider your views."

Kwon Sim's facial muscles quivered imperceptibly. He could not but take off his hat to Comrade Kum Song's advice that he should be tolerant.

"Quite honestly, I had several objections to the views you expressed at yesterday lecture, but we will be able to talk that over later. I came here early this morning because you looked so discouraged last night. You shouldn't be discouraged, sir."

Kwon Sim remained silent.

"I hope you will do a lot of things for the students in Kirin. They are enterprising. If you awaken them with the right theories, it would help our movement greatly. They are the new revolutionary generation, who will carry on the Korean communist movement, aren't they?"

Kwon Sim could not but be ashamed. Who could this student sitting here before me be, Kwon Sim wondered. He stared at the student again, to find that he had an unusual loftiness about him and his eyes shone with intelligence. When did he come to Kirin, and from where, he asked himself, and has he been in Kirin long?

While he sank in these thoughts, Comrade Kum Song rose to his feet.

"I'll visit you again, sir. Do excuse me for interrupting your morning's reading," Comrade Kum Song said, glancing at the book Kwon Sim had been reading.

"Not at all. I hope you to come again often. I am very happy to have times like this."

Having shaken hands, Kwon Sim followed the visitor to the

main gate, and stood there for a long while watching Comrade Kum Song walking down the sunny alleyway.

Kwon Sim felt his heart warm. So Kirin is not such a small arena, he decided. There are students who kicked up the row and interrupted my lecture and there are excellent students like him. I don't know what differences this student has on the national question, but meeting such a fine young man is gratifying and encouraging.

Inhaling the frosty air Kwon Sim walked down towards Peita Street. The street was not yet busy. He thought he had better go to a quiet place for strolling, when he saw Chae Gyong coming towards the tobacco shop on the other side of the street. He had a school bag in his hand, so he seemed already on his way to school.

"I am sorry, sir," said Chae Gyong stopping under a tree white with frost.

"You needn't be sorry," returned Kwon Sim with a smile.

"If I had known that the meeting would be plunged into such a mess, I would not have invited you. But I did not think it would turn out like that, sir."

"Whether you expected it or not, it doesn't matter. I am also to blame. Let us be tolerant in all matters. I feel quite all right because as a Marxian student I have pride."

Saying this, Kwon Sim stretched his hand towards a wagtail on a bough of the tree and waved his hand. The nimble bird flitted from one bough to another, scattering the frost flowers. Where did that pretty bird come from? he wondered. It's so little and pretty yet so lively, flying, chirping and wagging its tail.... Kwon Sim was thinking like a child, and he approached Chae Gyong, laying his hand on his shoulder.

"Isn't that like fairyland? When reality is painful, it is not so bad to sink in that world." Kwon Sim whispered as if not to startle the bird. However, Chae Gyong paid no attention to the fairy world; his present train of thought was painful.

6

In fact, the interruption of the lecture had been a greater blow to Chae Gyong than to Kwon Sim. The despair in which

Chae Gyong had been while living in Kirin had now turned to total disillusion. He thought and thought but he had no desire to do anything here in Kirin. Kwon Sim was proud of being a Marxian student and had wanted to do something here, but now it did not appeal to him any more.

If you run the communist movement as Kwon Sim did—cooping yourself up in the study and writing articles—you could do it in a more congested place than Kirin. But could you run a communist movement just by reading books and writing a few articles, divorced from the masses and ignoring their voice? To Chae Gyong's mind, Kwon Sim was an outworn figure despite his profession of communism.

And now they said Paek Sun Gi was going to leave his school and go away. This was a great stimulant to Chae Gyong. In spite of his nationalist inclinations, Paek Sun Gi was an intelligent man. That was why he was leaving Kirin. Chae Gyong had an urge to have a heart-to-heart talk with Paek Sun Gi. But he had been unable to meet Paek, for Paek had not been to school since the lecture.

As usual Chae Gyong came home from school with a clouded face.

His younger sister Gyong Ju, a Girls' Middle School student, was already at home cooking supper. When there was no wind, the oven in the kitchen would not light, and she was having trouble. Both brother and sister had tried to repair the oven several times, but their efforts were fruitless. He could see his sister moving a large vessel in the smoky kitchen.

"Oh hell, is the damned heating system giving you trouble again?"

"Oh, you are back? Shut the door and wait inside." His sister was too considerate to let her brother into the kitchen.

"I'll help you."

"No, you needn't. Go on in." Gyong Ju pushed her brother back.

"You needn't shed tears alone. Let's shed tears together."

"Ho ho ho. What's the use of both of us crying? I'll manage by myself. Go into the room." Gyong Ju said, wiping her eyes with her apron. Chae Gyong noticed her eyelids were all red. So he was pushed back into the room. As it was cold the kitchen door was only half-open, so most of the smoke stayed in. Chae Gyong spent several moments in the boarded part of the kitchen before he went into the upper room. He felt a dreadful

pain as if his chest was hit by an axe.

What a poor creature you are, said Chae Gyong to himself. I don't want her to face such hardship, but I can't help it. Accuse your brother! Why are you so tender-hearted?

Chae Gyong remembered his dead father and mother. He thought if one of them had been alive, life would not have been so hard for Gyong Ju.

Chae Gyong's father had come to a village in Manchuria and worked as a tenant before he died. After his father's death Chae Gyong moved into Kirin with his mother. But his mother had died in her first year here in this small house, clasping her children's hands. So brother and sister were left to face the harsh world alone. But they were so tenacious that they had been able to keep this house and even go to school.

Chae Gyong delivered newspapers and milk and Gyong Ju made fishing nets and sold them at the Sungari River wharf. On Sundays Gyong Ju went to a rice-cleaning mill to sort out the grain and Chae Gyong carried loads at the wharf. Sometimes brother and sister sat up all night, making fishing nets. With the money they earned the brother studied at the Law School and the sister at the Girls' Middle School.

They lived as tenaciously as a stubborn pine tree that sucks up water through roots in the crevice of a rocky precipice. Fierce winds and biting frost could not destroy such vitality.

Gyong Ju had finished cooking. And all the smoke had blown out of the kitchen. The air was clear and wisps of white steam were rising from a crack in the pot lid. For a while Gyong Ju rinsed the ashy utensils and wiped the front of the oven. And to prepare breakfast, she went out with the sorghum soaked in water, put it in the mortar and pounded.

Gyong Ju did not look like a student. Her hands, accustomed to hard work, were as big as a boy's. With her huge hands she pounded the pestle. Once in a while she stopped pounding and stirred the grain with a scoop. And sometimes she wiped her forehead with her apron, fatigue showing on her face.

It was dusk when brother and sister sat down at the dining table. Chae Gyong looked as thoughtful as ever. His sister noticed the change in her brother's face and cast watchful glances at him.

"Are you feeling unwell?"

"No."

The two took supper with heavy hearts. After supper Chae Gyong broke the silence.

"Gyong Ju, do you think you could live alone here if I went away?"

"What are you talking about all of a sudden?"

"It's not sudden. I have been thinking about it for some time."

"I can live on all right, but where do you intend to go before you finish school?"

"What's the good of the damned school? I must quit school, because I have realized that it's no use going on there."

"Why no use?"

"It's no use. What we learn at the Law School has nothing to do with the road we are going to take. What's the good of wasting time in learning things that have nothing to do with us?"

"If you quit school, must you leave Kirin?"

"Just think of it. What can we do here at Kirin? We're aiming at socialism, resolved to make a revolution. What can we do staying on here? Should I run with the students, arguing away day and night? Or should I get involved in factional strife like Mr. Choe Gon scurrying about disputing things? I don't think there is anything to do in Kirin."

"But, brother, why do you think of Mr. Choe Gon only? Mr. Kwon Sim came over to Kirin from Seoul. Can't you work together with such people?"

"I must leave Kirin because I'm afraid I would end by becoming a man like Mr. Kwon Sim. Just reading books and writing articles...that is no socialist movement. The other day I visited Mr. Kwon Sim. He was absorbed in reading, living on porridge because he has stomach trouble. He had sunken eyes. We organized the meeting in order to bring him into the arena of activity but it failed. If a Marxist coops himself up like that, what is he doing to achieve his ideal? How can he make a socialist revolution? I don't want to live that way."

Gyong Ju could not answer. Startled, she stared at her brother for many moments before she lowered her eyes. She had respected Kwon Sim, believing that he was a true socialist, and she felt her heart sinking. Now that her brother had said it, she was inclined to think that he was right.

"Well, where do you intend to go?"

"Anywhere. Since I am not able to make revolution, I think

I had better admit my inability, and make some sort of living. I resolved to make revolution and forced you to share my hardships, but there has been no result. And I don't want to stay on here to see all my acquaintances day and night and show my plight. As for you, you are at school, and you must finish it. I shall find a job in some other place. Sun Hui's brother says he is going to go to Shanghai or somewhere to get into some sort of movement but, to my mind, all that will be quite useless. The situation looks awful. I think I would rather go down to Chientao where there are many Koreans. There I will get in touch with my friends and get a job as a teacher or a journalist so as to educate people. That way I will help the revolution a little bit at least. I have decided to become the manure to tend a revolution in the distant future."

Gyong Ju did not say anything. She just washed the dishes. She had always respected her brother's views. And she thought this was such a serious problem that she should put in a lot of thought before she spoke. It concerned the revolution; it was a serious question that could determine her brother's whole future and her own as well.

Gyong Ju thought and thought. To her, too, the revolution here seemed remote. They only argued heatedly and achieved nothing. Gyong Ju, too, had often thought it a meaningless bustle and a mess. Maybe her brother was right in his resolve to become manure for a revolution in the future? In a way it seemed pathetic, but on second thoughts, it seemed far-sighted and audacious, too. Her heart contracted at the thought of her brother's desperate decision. An indescribable grief gnawed at her heart. She thought of her mother and father; thought of losing her brother; can't I work for the revolution without losing them? she asked herself. One thought after another flitted across her mind and filled her heart with tears.

Chae Gyong did not go to his school next day; Gyong Ju had hurried off to hers. But she was in such a state all day that she did not catch anything the teachers said. And occasionally she was gripped by the fear that she might not be able to carry on at this school though her brother said she should. If my brother was leaving to face new hardships for himself, how can I carry on studying here in Kirin, she asked herself. I had better leave school, too, and find a way to make a living. Gyong Ju gave a quiet sigh of grief, looking round at the dear classmates.

"Don't you feel well, Gyong Ju? You don't look well," a girl at

the same desk asked her, noticing a change in Gyong Ju's attitude.

"I have no reason to feel unwell; I'm all right."

"But you don't look well."

"It's how I always look." Gyong Ju forced a smile on her blushing face.

Making her weary way home in the evening Gyong Ju's brain was occupied by the thought of her brother's departure. The setting sun reflected on the snow and the carriages dashed up and down the street, the sound of flipping the whips reverberating in the air. The dry leaves dropped from the trees. Once her brother was away, Gyong Ju thought, she would have to wait for him for ever, standing forlornly in the street like those trees.

Gyong Ju hurried past Tunghsing Bookshop. She saw a huge crowd of people in front of a large general store. Students, and other pedestrians, and even a labourer who had a loaded carrying pole, stopped and, standing on tiptoe, craned their necks over the crowd to see what was going on. Gyong Ju was so unhappy she was going to pass the crowd. But she happened to see a man whose features left such a deep imprint on her mind that she stopped in spite of herself. Between the cap of a student and the shoulder of a grown man in a long-sleeved tunic, she noticed the familiar face of a rickshawman with a thick yellow moustache. The rickshawman was mumbling something, and bowing. He was encircled by a crowd of spectators. Gyong Ju's heart beat fast although she did not yet know exactly what had happened. She had seen this rickshawman rather often in Tungtien Street and Honan Street. With a passenger on the rickshaw he would run, sticking out his yellow-bearded jaw, sweating profusely. Was it the thick yellow beard that so reminded her of her father? Whenever she saw him, she thought of her father, and she would stay standing for a while watching this man who ran, stooping, as if under the whip.

Now this rickshawman was surrounded by a crowd. What was he talking about, attracting the attention of so many people?

Gyong Ju went closer to the crowd and looked over to the front of the general shop where crates of goods were piled up. And there was a rickshaw, the implement of drudgery that had always followed the old man like his shadow.

Bowing deeply and stretching out his hand to a gentleman who had apparently just alighted from the rickshaw, he entreated: "Sir, would you please give me a few more pennies, just as giving alms to the poor."

The rickshawman bowed again and again, shaking his huge hand whose knuckles were bent. He held two or three coins in his stiff palm that seemed to have come from the gentleman.

"What? what? giving alms to the poor? You think I will be punished in the other world if I don't give alms to the poor? You bloody thief...." The gentleman wore gold-rimmed spectacles and a coat with an otter-skin collar, but he cursed the rickshawman over a few pennies. Obviously it was his blasphemies that had drawn the crowd.

"My lord, think of the distance from the railway station. If I did not have children at home crying for food, I would carry you for nothing. Please give me just two pennies more."

Gyong Ju felt a lump rise in her throat. The rickshawman was so miserable. It seemed that many little ones were clinging to him and crying for food. Gyong Ju was angry. Why doesn't he give the rickshawman the fee he deserves! Doesn't he know why the poor man has run, gasping, pulling the rickshaw in clothes that could hardly stave off the cold! Doesn't he have money enough to pay the fee? Oh, that ignoble fellow! Look at the sleek fleshy cheeks...I wish to God somebody would slap his face!

The gentleman held his walking cane with the other hand, determined to go away without paying the full fee.

"My lord, please give me another penny at least, on the Three People's Principles," entreated the rickshawman sticking to the gentleman and grabbed the skirt of his overcoat.

"You scoundrel, you know only the Three People's Principles and not the Five Volumes of Constitution? You damned thief...."

The gentleman jerked back the skirt of his overcoat and raised his cane. Gyong Ju gritted her teeth. At this moment, a student darted in and gripped the raised arm of the gentleman.

"What are you doing? Why do you hit the man? If you took the rickshaw you should pay the fee. Who else is the thief?" A slender student glared at the gentleman with fiery eyes. As he was held by the wrist, the bespectacled man staggered a step backward and stared at the student goggle-eyed.

"Why don't you keep your nose out of my business?"

"Don't give me such stuff and give this man the fee he has earned. Look here, how much do you want?" The student asked the rickshawman. Gyong Ju saw in him uncommon dignity.

"Just two more pennies will do for the distance from here to the station." The rickshawman said, lifting up his yellow face,

like an icteric's.

"Pay up. You have come comfortably on the rickshaw, heavily clad in Western clothes and overcoat, but this man has brought you here in rags torn on the back, trembling in the cold. Were it not for the pay, he would not do such drudgery."

The gentleman was so hard pressed that he could not utter a word, his clean-shaven bluish chin quivering. From among the crowd there were voices accusing the gentleman.

"Hurry up and pay. If you refuse to pay the fee, it is you who are the thief. If you don't pay, you'll be given beans."

There was a stir among the crowd, and the gentleman stole a look at the student's stern face, and at last pulled off his leather gloves, putting the hooked handle of the stick on his arm. He unbuttoned his overcoat with a hand that wore a diamond ring and took a wallet out of his coat pocket. The student stared gravely at the finger with the diamond ring. Having received the money the rickshawman thanked the student instead of the gentleman.

"You needn't thank me. You cannot say that you have received as much as you should get for the distance from the railway station. The world is so unfair, but you must not live as a coward. If you let him ride your rickshaw, you must demand the proper fee. Why do you beg him for the money? We are all men. Why do you beg a fellow like that? Is he any better than you? Don't do that from now on." The student said this, glaring the gentleman fleeing towards the back of the general store.

The rickshawman expressed his thanks to the student, bowing again and again. Without a word the student threaded through the crowd and walked down the street.

Gyong Ju felt refreshed. Her misery and anger seemed to have flown. She saw the student walking away. He looked like a giant coming from some ideal world she had long been anxious to see. There was a hubbub around her.

"Which school is he from?"

"Yuwen Middle School. He used to board at Sin Dong Ho's."

"Could a middle school student be so mature?"

"Not only mature. How bold and eloquent he is! With a few words he really dealt with that bespectacled fellow."

"Anyhow he is an unusual student. How delightful and how pleasing."

The crowd scattered, excited. The man who had unhooked his loads from the carrying pole to watch appeared to have felt

some impact; he blushed and smiled before he left the spot, walking more vigorously.

Gyong Ju stayed for a long time staring in the direction in which the student had gone, before she walked on. For a moment she had felt happy, but now her heart was gripped by what the student had told the rickshawman. That the world was not fair; that all men were equal, and that he must stop being servile. It was strange that these mild expressions had impressed her so. According to the student, both rickshawman and gentleman were men. And it was obvious to her that they were men both. But how come this inequality had been created between men? She had read and heard about this, but had never given such deep thought to it before.

Take our own case, my brother and I. Some boys and girls are well-dressed and well-fed, and can go to school without a care; why is that we, my brother and I have to knit nets, deliver milk and sort rice to go to school! Why should I go to the rice shop and buy a handful of rice with a few coins, and whirl round and run into the alleyway with a reddened face! What is the difference between the pennies in the rickshawman's hand and those in mine? How miserable the rickshawman is! And how miserable my brother and I are! There is inequality between rich and poor—the poor have nothing to eat or wear and weep in despair hugging their children, while that bespectacled gentleman and his kind bleed the poor white and are well-fed and well-clothed—when did this inequality begin and why? So it is the duty and obligation as man to rise in righteous indignation and put an end to this injustice. We must look to the very bottom of this society from this angle; isn't this the problem raised by our times?

Gyong Ju walked on in a deeply meditative mood. She was still thinking of the student. By taking the just and audacious action and leaving the gentleman no way out but to pay for using the rickshaw, the student found a forceful answer to the pressing question that had put us in agony today.

"Brother, we must make revolution, come what will. If, as you claim, it is impossible to do it in Kirin, you must do it at all costs wherever you may go. Backing down from the revolution is tantamount to committing a crime against our times. It is a crime, indeed. Today, I have understood the contradictions of our society more clearly." Gyong Ju whispered to herself as she hurried home to her brother.

CHAPTER II

SOWING THE SEEDS

1

One evening students were arriving sporadically at Choe Jin Guk's home at the foot of a hill on the Sungari River. A puppy lay on the earthen porch, but he did not bark. Every time a visitor arrived, he growled softly and then relaxed again. Several students were already gathered in the upper room. Without caps, their robust faces were beaming. There were strangers among the visitors. A student grinned at the Marx portrait hung up over Choe Jin Guk's desk, recalling an episode. Some time ago Choe Jin Guk's classmates found him carrying Marx's portrait in his book. Choe insisted that the picture was that of a certain physicist. He was so firm about it that some of his classmates believed him. It was the same portrait the student was looking at now.

"'Lamartine's brilliant spark has turned into Cabeniac's incendiary bomb.' What does that mean?" A student asked, knitting his dark brows. He had been reading the *June Revolution*.

"It must refer to the outcome of the Paris uprising. The poet Lamartine had remained a moderate Republican, but when General Cabeniac set up a dictatorial regime, he joined in the brutal repression. So it means the mercilessness of the class struggle." This was another student's reply.

Pak Gwang Sik was also absorbed in a book. Beside him sat Choe Jin Guk, looking smilingly at Pak's extraordinarily high cheekbones and big ears. The mischievous Choe had an urge to tease Pak, but he suppressed it. Most respectable of all was Chang Dok Sun. He was husky and older than the others. The dozen or so students gathered here tonight had joined Chang Dok Sun, Pak Gwang Sik and Choe Jin Guk; Comrade

Kum Song had told them to come. Chang Dok Sun had gone to the Vocational School as he had wished. He had brought in one of his schoolmates, who was as husky and unsophisticated as Chang Dok Sun himself.

In the kitchen Comrade Kum Song was chatting with Choe Jin Guk's father. The father, who had a sparse beard, was explaining how, having broken his leg at work, he had been dismissed from the railway yard. He said that were he ten years younger, he would not leave the chief of the railway yard in peace.

"My goodness! what are you talking about? What would you do with him? What do you think you could do if you had not left him in peace?" Choe Jin Guk's mother cut in, busily washing the dishes. Her features formed a sharp contrast to her husband's. The husband was as short as the son and had the same yellow eyes. But the mother was tall and had dark eyes. Husband and wife were just as dissimilar in character—she was touchy and impetuous.

"Oh, they are a bunch of rascals. I was injured at my work, lost my job and my ability to support my family. They just sacked me. If they had a spark of conscience, they would not have pushed me out of my job." Choe Jin Guk's father continued, ignoring his wife's interruption.

"So you can't use that leg?"

"I can't bend the knee. The kneecap was not treated properly. So I have to keep this damned thing stretched out. You must excuse me...."

"Oh, not at all, sir. I didn't know that, although I have been here often. I only noticed you limp a little."

"You can hardly tell when I walk."

Comrade Kum Song touched the old working man's leg, which was as hard and heavy as an iron pillar. Deprived of its function, it was only a nuisance. And it grieved him more than an emaciated leg.

"First the shinbone was broken. Of course that was because it was hit by a locomotive wheel that had been hanging up in the air until the wire rope snapped. They rushed me to the hospital, and the doctor wanted to cut off the leg because the bone was broken. I raised hell, so he said, 'All right, all right' and did not cut the bone; he smeared the wound with iodine tincture and bandaged a piece of wooden board onto the shin. That iodine is quite good, you know. It's as refreshing as rice wine."

"Humph, you singing that rice wine song again, eh?" Choe Jin Guk's mother called out again.

But the old man took no notice of his wife and went on.

"So I was laid up at home for months, unable to take off the piece of wooden board. The broken bone healed, but then this knee wouldn't move. It stuck to the bones."

"What did I say? I told you to stay at the hospital as they advised, didn't I? But you refused, were stubborn and came home, and here you are. It's nobody's fault. You are so stubborn, you see...."

"You just shut your mouth. I was right in bidding farewell to those fellows. How much would I have had to pay if I had stayed at the hospital? The doctor is the biggest of all thieves." Choe Jin Guk's father was angry now and glared at his wife.

"At which hospital were you treated?"

"At the Railway Hospital. They say the hospital treats railway workers rather well. But had I stayed on there and had this knee treated, too, I would have been bankrupted by the hospital fee. We Koreans are getting more and more miserable. However hard we try, we have no way out. I wish to God I could be free of this poverty even for a day."

Comrade Kum Song felt the father's anger smouldering in his heart. So this worker has a stiff leg, a worker who has nothing to sell except his labour! He should stand firmly on the earth, though in the heavy chains of class society. How is he going to walk through this cruel world now?

"Don't be so discouraged, sir. All poor Koreans are in the same situation as you. We are a people deprived of our country; what's the good of complaining about the wrongs done to any one of us? Every Korean must rise up and fight the Japs and their running dogs, the landlords and capitalists. It's no use just lamenting. I have a grandfather, too; All his life he has ploughed others' land toiling and moiling, wearing his fingers to the bone. I can hardly describe all the hardships he has suffered."

"Um, so you have your grandfather. He must be alive because Mr. Kim Hyong Jik died so young."

"Then you still have grandmother?" asked Choe Jin Guk's mother wiping the front of a cooking pot.

"Yes, I have."

"Tut, tut. How they must have grieved! They lost such a great man...."

"If they are tenant farmers on the barren soil near Pyong-yang, it must be very hard for them to scratch a living."

The chain of conversation broke when the kitchen door was opened and a newspaper parcel was pushed in.

"What's this?"

"Salted mackerels; uncle likes them."

The fish were brought in by a young man called Choe Gi Jun who worked at the railway yard. He did not even put his head in, he just asked Choe Jin Guk's mother for an axe.

"What do you want the axe for?"

"Just give it to me."

The woman handed out the axe which was in a corner of the kitchen. The youth shut the door.

"Do you know he has been helping us all the time, ever since the old man was kicked out of his job." Choe Jin Guk's mother said, unwrapping the parcel. Her husband heaved a sigh and said nothing and soon they heard the sound of an axe outside. Choe Jin Guk's mother hurried out and asked the young man what he was cutting on this cold evening.

"Never mind."

"Why, this is the log the old man picked up in the Sungari River last autumn. Why do you cut it? We lay it aside until it dries."

"But if I chop it, it will dry faster, won't it?"

"You are the nicest, most considerate person I have ever met."

Unable to dissuade the youth from chopping up the log, Choe Jin Guk's mother came back to the kitchen.

Comrade Kum Song thought that he was an open youth, as are most young workers. He had met Gi Jun at this house before. He had been told that Gi Jun worked at the railway yard, and had talked to him. He found out he was free and easy, yet dependable. Gi Jun's father had been a highly skilled stone mason, had worked on various harbour projects, and then died of consumption. Gi Jun told him that he had got involved in a strike at a railway factory and been arrested, and that after coming over to Manchuria his mother had scraped a living by selling red-bean porridge until she, too, had died. When asked if he had read any Marxist books, he only smirked.

"What books have you read?"

"None. But I know that the working class must lead the revolution."

"Ha ha ha...."

As Comrade Kum Song laughed, Gi Jun blushed and followed suit. Comrade Kum Song was happy to have met such a good comrade. He had asked Choe Jin Guk to let Gi Jun attend tonight's meeting. And apparently Gi Jun had received the message.

For a while they heard the loud noise of an axe going through wood outside, then Gi Jun came through the kitchen door, his face shining with sweat. Seeing Comrade Kum Song, he greeted him, his huge mouth showing a protruding tooth.

"Do come on in."

Gi Jun took off his canvas shoes.

"Have you had supper?" asked Choe Jin Guk's father.

"Of course I have."

"Wouldn't it be better to board at the hostel? All the other assistant engine drivers board at the hostel. It must be a nuisance to cook for yourself."

"Do you think you can eat properly at the hostel? It is better to cook for myself though it is hard. Hak Jun says he will get out of the hostel, too."

"You are right. That thief, Pockmark is very good at cheating workers. You could never get a square meal there."

Choe Jin Guk's father urged Gi Jun to sit down.

In the next room, while waiting for Comrade Kum Song, the students discussed a novel that was being serialised in a newspaper.

It was about a tenant who had been pushed off his land and forced to leave his village. The author had poured his compassion into the story. But some of the students were not satisfied with the novel because the author only shed tears of sympathy over the dispossessed peasant, showing not a spark of resistance. One student commented that the author preached servility, another that the author had some class consciousness though not much, and it might develop into a sort of philanthropic attitude. On the other hand, Choe Jin Guk said that those who thought the novel preached a servile spirit or philanthropy had not understood it. He said that the appeal hidden below the surface of the novel drew sparks of class consciousness from the reader and that this was the author's intention.

When the argument was at its height, Comrade Kum Song came into the room with Gi Jun. All the students stopped talking, their faces reddening. Pak Gwang Sik, who had not got in-

volved in the debate and had been reading a book, stretched and looked up.

Comrade Kum Song shook hands with every student and thanked them all for coming; there were some strangers among them. Gi Jun shook hands with them all, too.

Presently Comrade Kum Song sat down to chat to those who were new to him. Gi Jun was seated beside him.

Choe Jin Guk's father, who had been in the kitchen, put his cigarette-case into his pocket and got to his feet.

"The meeting has apparently begun in the next room. You'd better slip out once in a while and keep an eye on things. And remember, Jap stooges are more dangerous than the local cops." Saying this, Choe Jin Guk's father opened the kitchen door and went out. Since there was no work on the wharf these days, he worked on night shift at the lumber mill.

Choe Jin Guk's mother had been told that there would be an important meeting tonight and she had been intending to go outside to stand guard.

She soon put on a jacket and went out. The night was freezing. She walked carefully so that the ice in the yard would not crack and went out into the road that led to the ferry. Though it was a moonless night she could see around her because of the snow. There was not a shadow to be seen. She could hear the sound of the electric saw cutting wood at the lumber mill. She wondered how her husband had managed to get down that ice-bound slope to the lumber mill. Her heart ached at the thought that he had gone down leaning on the stick, dragging his stiff leg. She came back into the yard. The students' whispers came floating from the next room.

How come such a crosspatch of a son was so intimate with such a wonderful student, the son of Mr. Kim Hyong Jik, Choe Jin Guk's mother wondered. There is a saying, a streamlet must take the right course if it is to join a big river. Choe Song Gun's son, it seemed, was now engaged in the independence movement and was making his mother play her part.

The mother was happy. Then she thought she saw something move and almost shouted at the bough of a tree on the road to the ferry. It was so cold that she could not stay out for long.

She went back into the kitchen. She took down a sieve filled with hemp thread and sat by the crack of the door looking out, as she wound the thread on a spindle.

In the next room Comrade Kum Song started talking in a low voice.

"I know you all aspire at socialism, so I'm going to speak frankly. Comrade Gi Jun, you knew why we are meeting tonight, didn't you?"

"I was told about it by Comrade Choe."

"Good. I would like to discuss a rather important problem with you tonight. Where should we begin if we want to start a revolution? That is important."

Looking around at each face, he went on quietly.

"...If we want to start a revolution, we must spread Marxism-Leninism. And for that we must form study groups everywhere to draw in and unite the forces of revolution. You cannot start a revolution without understanding Marxism-Leninism. The revolutionary movement is not developing in Kirin now. Many students are indeed attracted to the Marxist-Leninist course; but they see it as a distant light, a dream. There is no hard core and no conscious effort to spread the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and carry out the revolution. So we must become that core, set up Marxist-Leninist study groups at schools or among the railway workers and work to disseminate these ideas....

"In order to set this chaotic situation straight, it is necessary to spread the Marxist-Leninist teaching. First one or two will learn, and they will pass it on to ten or maybe a hundred who then will educate thousands and thousands of people in these ideas, and make it possible to draw our whole society into the vortex of revolution. Can we do this? I'm sure we can. The young people who are seeking a new truth cannot reject the science that is aimed at building an ideal society free of exploitation and oppression. When they have access to Marxist-Leninist theory, they will surely see that it is sound and follow us."

All present were straining their ears. Pak Gwang Sik looked round, his dark eyes very round. Gi Jun listened attentively, sitting as firm as a rock. But his heart, too, gradually started wavering. He remembered the strike at the railway yard several years ago, when he was only 15; had worked at the forge and carried secret messages to the workers' mutual-aid society leaders. The leaders used to draft handbills and directives under a fish-oil lamp. The house they used was in a back-alley that was so boggy with the accumulated sewage that you had to wear long rubber boots to get there. Gi Jun still remembered one of them who used to lend him pamphlets—a man with glasses, a high

forehead and hollow cheeks. The leaders educated the workers and drove them to strike. Hundreds downed tools, and the huge yard became silent as a grave. They were in good spirits, conscious of their power. But the Japanese police raided the workers' hovels, and dozens were arrested in a single day. Several hundred of those who remained ran into the yard and destroyed the office building. That day Gi Jun was caught by the Japanese police, after his arm had been broken by the supervisor's stick. He was thrown into jail and interrogated for a fortnight. When he was released he found that the workers had been herded back into the yard to work. But all the leaders of the workers' mutual-aid society had disappeared. He went to the boggy back-alley and inquired after them. And he was told that that night when the workers were arrested all the leaders had gone into hiding.

Since then, he had been sure that striking was useless for it was the workers who had the hard time in the end. Now, working at the Kirin railway yard, he had experienced so many intolerable things. If you saw yourself as subhuman, regarded it as natural for the workers to be exploited, it might be different. But if you saw yourself as a man and wondered why one man should be harassed and bled white by another, you found it hard to control your anger. So when Choe Jin Guk's father was dismissed, he had an urge to get up and fight. But whenever anger took over, he remembered the day he was released from jail, when he had cried himself out, with his broken arm, lying with his face in the sand at the seashore. He feared the same result, the same loss for the workers. But, now, hearing Comrade Kum Song's explanation tonight, he felt his whole body invigorated. As Comrade Kum Song had just said, once the workers were awakened to the Marxist-Leninist teaching, they could do anything with their united power.

Comrade Kum Song explained in detail how to set about forming Marxist-Leninist study groups: The groups must never come to the surface; they must only include active people, reliable socialists. They must go among the people and draw in comrades one by one.

Modest in his attitude Comrade Kum Song went on talking very seriously.

In the kitchen Choe Jin Guk's mother was drowsing, her hands winding the thread on the spindle. She had thought of going out again, but could not conquer the day's fatigue. She

was very tired, so she dropped off to a sleep. She dreamt that she was walking on along a village road, a vessel full of fish fresh out of the Sungari River on her head. The road was slippery after the rain, so she took off her bast-sandals. The heavy vessel was pressing on her neck. But she walked firmly on, digging her toes into the slippery earth, telling herself that she must not go home until she had sold all the fish. "Buy fish, live fish! You can pay with sorghum, millet or beans," she called out in a husky voice as she walked on and on. But there were no buyers. She wanted to squat down and stretch her legs on the muddy road and cry.

She woke to hear some one approaching the door. Her hands kept winding the thread on the spindle. A cold sweat ran down from the roots of her hair and she knocked the door to the next room. What a blunder I have made, she thought. I said I would stand on guard for them and I dropped off and did not hear the police coming...that must be the policeman right outside. The voice stopped in the next room.

She was in an agony of suspense, but then when the man came, it was her husband.

"My goodness! You scared me out of my wits. Why didn't you cough as you crossed the yard?"

The old man did not reply.

"Why did you come back so soon?"

"They told me to go away because there was no job for me. Those bastards...." The old man burst out in a rage as he threw his fur cap in the corner. Choe Jin Guk opened the door and peeped out.

"Carry on with your meeting, son. I knocked because I thought it was a policeman or one of the Jap spies."

"Has father been somewhere?"

"Yes, he went to the lumber mill but came back because they did not give him work."

Then Choe Jin Guk shut the door quickly. Sitting in the middle of the boarded part of the kitchen old Choe Song Gun heaved a great sigh. He had thought he had a job for the winter but he had failed again. He did not think he would get work now before the ice melted and the boats could use the wharf on the Sungari River. His shoulders fell and he put a pinch of tobacco into his pipe and held it between his lips.

In the next room, Pak Gwang Sik was saying that to disseminate the Marxist-Leninist teaching in Kirin, it was, of course,

important to organize the study groups, but it was equally important to be vigilant against factions and to dissolve the nationalist-run students' society. He added that since Paek Sun Gi was said to be leaving here, he was out of the question, but as all the other officers of the students' society were from nationalist groups, it would be impossible to bring the students in Kirin into our fold as long as they were in office. Therefore, he insisted that the students' society should be destroyed and its officers got rid of. Choe Jin Guk strongly seconded this proposal.

"That's an excellent idea. That bunch of officers are the cancer of Kirin. If we get rid of them, the students will be much more inclined towards Marxism."

"Not merely inclined. At present the nationalists are using the students' society to get hold of the students' forces, so we have to work to destroy that organization. We must overthrow it."

Choe Jin Guk and Pak Gwang Sik were very emphatic about this and quite a few students agreed with the two of them. Being cautious, Chang Dok Sun and Gi Jun watched Comrade Kum Song.

"We must not act too rashly. And we must not take a destructive line. We need to arm ourselves with Marxism and Leninism and help and re-educate those who have chosen different roads, teach the muddle-headed and the ignorant, awaken them, pull them all in, and convert them to become part of our own forces. No, we should not destroy the students' society; we must rather infiltrate and win the organisation over, and all the membership."

"Right. I support that. It seems to be different from Wol Pa or Choe Gon's methods of overthrowing." Chang Dok Sun agreed with Comrade Kum Song. And Comrade Kum Song continued.

"Outwardly, the students' society, which is under nationalist control seems to be doing something, though in fact, it is doing nothing at all. And clever youngsters, even though nationalists, are deeply unhappy with the situation. What is the source of Paek Sun Gi's disillusion? Why can't we give these students a Marxist-Leninist education?"

"We can. I, too, was on the Independence Army side and giving you a lot of trouble, before I became a Marxist," said Chang Dok Sun, staring wide-eyed at the students around

him. His yellowish eyes sparked fire.

Everybody was silent. Pak Gwang Sik and Choe Jin Guk sighed and looked down. They had been itching to smash up that students' society right away, but after Comrade Kum Song had made his point, they realised that his methods would be more effective.

Again Comrade Kum Song spent quite a time explaining how to get started on the revolution.

His arguments were quite different from Choe Gon's or those of Wol Pa, those executive committee members of the "General Bureau of the Korean Communist Party in Manchuria" in Kirin both of whom talked big and banged the table as they spoke. His assertions also differed from Kwon Sim's. Everybody listened quietly, engraving each of his words upon their memory. They were excited, feeling that a new road had opened up before them. They felt proud and confident. Gi Jun, especially, was excited.

When the meeting was over, he hurried past the town gate. He lived in a back-alley in Chaoyang Street. It was a one-room affair, and he did his cooking together with a young stoker.

The room was as dark as a cave; the lamp was not lit. Song Nam, the stoker, had gone supperless to bed. He had been down with flu for several days and had completely lost his appetite, so Gi Jun had prepared a bowl of porridge and egg.

"Why are you so late, brother?"

"The hell with brother. Sit up this minute. You should have eaten that porridge after I took the trouble to cook it. You think you can get over this cold by lying there and not eating? Come on, sit up."

Gi Jun helped him up. Song Nam was a weak youth; and having eaten nothing for some time, he had become quite emaciated. Gi Jun pushed the pillow into the corner to stop Song Nam lying down. Then he brought in the bowl of porridge which had been kept in the cooking pot. It was still lukewarm.

"You must cheer up, Song Nam."

"I'm trying to."

"My advice has got some meaning."

"What meaning?"

"You will know by the by. Open your mouth. Come on. I must feed you the bowlful of porridge tonight."

"Give it to me. I'll eat myself...."

"No. I know you won't unless I feed you."

Song Nam was forced to open his mouth like a child. He let a large spoon into his mouth half way and nibbled at the porridge.

"Open your mouth properly, eat up and put a good face on it. Don't suck like a little baby."

Song Nam accepted another spoonful. Tears ran down the cheeks.

"To shed the tears...."

"I was remembering my father. When he moved into Unggi from Myongchon, he used to feed me like this. He got rice and mixed it with water...I had dysentery."

"Don't tell me such a sad story. Why don't you tell me of something that will give us strength? When I was your age I was once on strike. I carried messages and pasted handbills up. Not only that. I was arrested by the Jap police and beaten up like hell."

Gi Jun persuaded Song Nam to swallow most of the porridge. Song Nam said he was full now, and stopped sucking at the spoon and was going to scrape it with his large front teeth. But Gi Jun persuaded him to finish it.

At that moment Comrade Kum Song and Chang Dok Sun were walking down the road to the east of the wharf on the Sungari River.

"Tonight I am delighted," said Comrade Kum Song, putting his hand on Chang Dok Sun's shoulder.

"What do you mean?"

"We have begun to cast our seeds over this now fallow land, you see."

Now Chang Dok Sun understood him and his heart was full.

"Though only few and small, the sunshine and warm wind will make them grow and bring revolution in this wasteland. I feel strong and optimistic."

"You remind me of what you said at Huatien. You advised me to read the *Communist Manifesto* and you often explained to me that we must plough the old land and cast our seeds. Now the meaning of your words has become clearer to me. Our revolution struck root at Huatien, didn't it?"

"It did. There were a great many difficulties, but in the long run we did turn the old soil and manage to plant some seeds. And I'm sure we will be able to do the same here at Kirin."

"Comrade Kum Song, the DIU (Down-with-Imperialism

Union) gave me new life and I am very excited now."

"So am I when I think of the DIU."

Comrade Kum Song walked on, holding Chang Dok Sun's hand firmly in his own. Indeed, his life at Huatien included many memorable experiences with Chang Dok Sun. It was a life as impressive as the mass of fiery clouds thickly gathered on the horizon.

2

Grieving over his father's death, Comrade Kum Song had firmly pledged himself to carry out his will, and so he left to go to Hwasong Uisuk School.

This was a school set up by the nationalists to train officers for the Independence Army.

On his arrival at Huatien, he found the town bubbling as if Korea might achieve her independence any day. Every house was crowded with Independence Army soldiers. Uniformed army commanders with long swords rode round on horseback; bugles sounded morning and night; soldiers marched through the street, singing army songs. Hwasong Uisuk School had a very large building, and at the school, too, there were bugles and military training every day. The students trained their bodies and studied under a rigid military system. Independence fighters came from Shanghai, America and Russia and made speeches to the students, encouraging them to take over the independence movement in the future.

Comrade Kum Song studied hard. He sat up many a night at his history and geography lessons and never missed any of the tough marches on which the trainees had often to run with sand loaded into their trouser bottoms.

But he could not tolerate this way of life for long. When he first came here, he expected to gain essential knowledge, for this school had been opened for a specific purpose of restoring the country's independence. Gradually, however, he came to look into the very basis of the life here, as no others did. He wondered if all this vociferation was a sound groundwork for pushing ahead with the independence movement. Quite a few other independence organizations had made just as much noise in the past.

They had raised their banners, blown their bugles and beaten their drums; each time Korean independence had seemed close at hand, but soon the banners were lowered as the ranks melted away. Comrade Kum Song knew there had been dozens of such organisations. Could one see anything different in Huatien from the bitter past, he asked to himself. They are doing things exactly the same way as the old independence organisations did. They collect military funds; they talk big but have no real idea on how to strike at the Japanese imperialists; they may partition up the territory and gather taxes...but how can you win Korean independence by that? How can the myth of Tangun or the feudal ethics taught at Hwasong Uisuk School educate an independence movement?

The school authorities watched nervously for any seeds of socialism. When they thought any student ideologically different from the others, they would first spy on him and then expel him. Since his enrolment here, quite a few students had been thrown out of the school and had had a lot of trouble. He could not repress his indignation. Everything that went on here was contrary to his father's ideas. He resolved to go ahead and find that new road to socialism which he had started seeking.

He got hold of Marxist-Leninist books and read them avidly without either Chang Dok Sun and Cho Hak Bong, classmates who lived in the same house, finding out. Sometimes he would read them in the grass by a stream and at other times go up to the hills on his way back from the school. In this way he explored the new truths step by step.

Around this time there was an incident that really shocked him. His landlady's son who belonged to an Independence Army company was carried home on a stretcher dead. He had been to Pyongan Province on a fund-raising mission for the independence movement.

He and two other soldiers had collected the money, and on their way back, they had a skirmish with the enemy and he was wounded. He had lost both his comrades and the money. Bleeding, he had crawled a hundred *ri*, with a gold watch that a man in Pyongan Province had donated before he died, still on his wrist. An Independence Army soldier, armed only with a pistol, reported this between sobs. As the stretcher was brought in, Chang Dok Sun and Cho Hak Bong made for the brook near the house. Comrade Kum Song sat for a while with the weeping family, then he went out to join Chang Dok Sun

and his friend.

"God damn it. This happened to brother Chil Bok though he had so many skills, because he was so poorly armed. What can you do with the discarded worn-out pistol that he had? You can't hope to hit Japs with that, when they are armed with modern rifles." Cho Hak Bong complained angrily; he had always complained about the poor armament of the Independence Army. As his friends did not say anything, Cho Hak Bong continued:

"And are the modern rifles the only thing the Japs have got? They've cannons, too, and tanks, and warships, even airplanes. What can we do with pistols, *totung* guns, or *yaenju* guns whose safety catches often break? The other day I went to the first company; some soldiers had not even *yaenju* or pistols; they carried daggers in their shirts. Some of them grumbled that they had bought broken pistols with wooden holsters in Shanghai...."

"Don't make a fuss. If we had plenty of good weapons and had every advantage, the fight for independence would be easy. Because we have little arms we buy them with the money collected from the people. It is unpatriotic to complain about the quality or lack of weapons," said Chang Dok Sun sternly. He was a size larger than Cho Hak Bong.

"Unpatriotic? How can you say that? Do you think it's patriotic to go and face modern rifles armed with pistols? The Independence Army commanders always use that word to keep our mouths shut. They tell us that weapons will come from Shanghai, from America, from Russia. Oh, they are coming from a lot of places—maybe. But are they really coming? How can they run an independence movement if they are unable to get arms?"

"You shouldn't talk like that. We mustn't meddle in these things. What we must do is to learn independence ideas and temper our bodies at school; that is our duty."

Chang Dok Sun and Cho Hak Bong went on arguing for quite a while.

Chang Dok Sun had already served in the Independence Army and had been in battle. In the days of the "Tongui-bu" he used to go to Pyongyang and Sunchon with other Independence Army soldiers armed with pistols to collect military funds. His father was killed in action serving with Hong Bom Do, and the Japs killed his mother when she gave help to Independence

Army soldiers. So Chang Dok Sun's heart was full of hatred for the Japs. That was why the leadership of the Independence Army recommended him for training as a military leader at Hwasong Uisuk School.

Li Chil Bok's mother's tearful lamentations were heard again.

"Chil Bok, my dear, what happened to you? You were so strong and healthy; why did you die so suddenly? You died without seeing the independence that you lived for. How can I avenge you? Oh, my heart is torn! Why did those barbarians from the island swallow up our country and kill even you? How can I avenge you, Chil Bok? Oh, how my heart bleeds."

It was the voice of the mother, who screamed, and kept hitting the floor. A white form, obviously Chil Bok's wife, flung the door open and ran out of the house. Her movements were discernible in the dark. She struck the wall of the house and called out to her dead husband.

Unable to soothe his aching heart, Comrade Kum Song walked beside the brook. He walked on and on through the grass, his clothes wet with dew. When his way was blocked by a *bunji* tree, he broke a branch off and walked through the bush to reach the edge of the brook. The water babbled over the stones. Where are you going and what are you saying? The noise was strangely tearful. He went round a bend to find the back-alley.

He passed the back-alley and presently reached the main street. The street was dark and silent. A horse, tied in the street, shook its mane and stamped its hoofs. The animal seemed to belong to an Independence Army company commander. It must have run quite a distance. It opened its mouth with a bit in it as if to bite the sky. How vigorous it looked!

As he went past a tall tile-roofed house, where the principal of Hwasong Uisuk lived, he heard several excited voices. They were arguing on how to count the years—whether from the year of the foundation of the country or the foundation of the Republic. This was one of the problems that had led to dissent in earlier independence organisations. I don't understand why they are again about this of all problems, he thought, disgusted. Don't you people know that yet another of Korea's precious sons has died aggrieved by the nation's ruin? How can it really matter which year we count the years from?

He was outside the town gate. As he passed the millet

field, the forlorn sound of the brook reached his ears again. The bush was luxuriant. The bird grass was very long now and fireflies flew around in the air. The farther up he went, the louder the noise of the water. Comrade Kum Song walked on and on and on throughout the night in a sad mood.

Next morning he went to school without breakfast. He felt calm now after a night of mental chaos, but his heart was heavy.

There were no lessons at the school that day; there was a meeting in the school grounds from early morning on.

An old man with a white beard said to come from Seoul, got up on the platform, supported by a training instructor in black glasses, while the principal and superintendent stood reverently beside the platform.

As soon as he was on the platform the old man shouted "Young men!", looking down at the students who stood there in the scorching sun.

"The old man is quite vigorous still...." The students whispered, startled by his loud shout.

The old speaker said that it was fortunate indeed for Korean independence and the nation's prosperity that Korean officers had to be trained in Manchuria like this. And he stressed that the students must learn the spirit of Korea. He was so full of vigour that he waved his arms, his wide sleeves fluttering, and sometimes stamped his feet so hard that he almost broke the wooden platform. As the sweat ran down his cheeks, he opened his ramie *turumagi* (outer coat) and pulled a white handkerchief out of his waistcoat pocket to wipe his face. He rubbed his face vigorously several times and shook the handkerchief before he carried on. Then he raised his hands and shouted; and each time he did so, his handkerchief fluttered like a banner. He spoke for more than an hour, but none of the students understood a word.

In truth, the students heard this kind of speech almost every other day. Not a single independence movement worker who visited Huatien went away without making a speech to the students. Everyone made speeches to encourage the students. The contents differed, some appealing to them to do their duty to their sovereign and to cultivate their morals, others speaking at length about the history of Ulji Mun Dok and Kang Gam Chan, while still others talked about the foreign philosophies that came in with the age of enlightenment. Latterly a man called Pae Gon came and recited "We Weep Bitterly and Loudly This

Day" and wailed bitterly, proposing to hit Li Wan Yong and Son Byong Jun (former Korean ministers who agreed to Korea's annexation with Japan), as well as the Japs.

Anyhow, each in their own way, they shouted passionately but the student audience heard so many speeches that they became confused. This argument seemed to be right, and then they heard another that seemed to be right as well. Why was there so much ambiguity and no unity of theory, the students could not help wondering.

On this day, when the speech was over, the military training continued until dusk. The students did their basic drill for over two hours under the scorching sun and then went on a forced march for which they had to put sand at the bottom of their trousers. The drill instructor buttoned his army tunic up to his neck and ran with the trainees, his sabre rattling against his high boots. He was a symbol of both grief and anger. He thought that in order to regain their country he must have a harder time than anybody, so he ran and ran, always ahead of the students. Sometimes his sabre gleamed overhead in the sun. When they had run 30 *ri* both the students' and the instructor's clothes were wet with sweat.

That evening many people visited Li Chil Bok's house to offer their condolences. All the leaders of the Independence Army in Huatien seemed to be gathered there. Among the visitors were the principal and superintendent of Hwasong Uisuk School and the drill instructor who, having had something to do at school, had had no time to change his uniform. He had unbuckled his sword near the mourning house, and started wailing as he approached the earthen porch. Soon after him, two carriages from Kirin came rattling in with a great noise. The horses had run so hard that their bodies steamed with sweat. From the vehicles alighted old Li Gap Mu in a hemp *turumagi* and Panama hat, followed by a throng of Independence Army officers. They went straight in to offer their condolences to the spirit of the departed. Li Gap Mu's hands trembled as he burned the incense.

"You have left this world by shedding your blood in righteous deed to win back our country and save our people; your death was not in vain. But how grievous! The country is not come ours yet. We are firmly resolved to avenge you, but when shall we be able to attain our goal?" The old man cried out prostrated in front of the departed, his long beard touching

the floor. The Independence Army officers produced their handkerchiefs and patted the corners of their eyes. The family of the deceased wailed more bitterly. They were joined by army officers from Kirin. The fat So Gun Ha was the only man who did not weep. He praised Li Chil Bok for his glorious death.

"You have passed away gloriously. It is a law that man is born once and dies once; there is nothing sad about it. You did not die in a sickbed, but on the field of battle fighting the enemy. You died like a man, and twenty million people will remember you. You died a hero, and I wish you happiness in the other world."

So Gun Ha's face was flushed; he made a bow and rose to his feet.

That night, too, Comrade Kum Song went out to the brook not to hear the plaintive wails. He looked up at the night sky and thought of the fate of the dead man.

What a sorry fate! Why should our young people die in vain like this? When a man who had risen up to fight to win back our country breathed his last, he must have writhed in unbearable agony. Mental pain is incomparably greater than physical. The independence movement has gone through many twists and turns since the days of Ryu Rin Sok's Poyak Temple, Cho Byong Jun's Tillers' Guild and Hong Bom Do's Hunters' Union and passed through the ordeal of the March the First Movement; how many organisations have emerged and crumbled this time in our blood-soaked land and how many Li Chil Boks they have buried in vain! But the leaders who drove them into the ground of death just burn incense and shed tears. Then they rise to their feet, and tomorrow they will send other Li Chil Boks to their death without changing their old methods devoid of the remotest hope of success. I cannot control my anger. I will never accept their way. I will not roam about this devastated land, swept by late autumn winds. I must plough and sow this old ground.

3

Comrade Kum Song studied hard at school. As he became more determined, though the situation in Huatien remained un-

changed, he gained a clearer view. He was absorbed in Marxist-Leninist literature and began to pick his comrades.

One day, on his way back from school, he took Chang Dok Sun to the top of a hill beside the road. He had planned to speak out to Chang Dok Sun first. The leadership of the Independence Army regarded Chang as hard core, and Chang himself worked well at school. Comrade Kum Song thought that once he showed youths like Chang new truths, it would be easier with the other students.

"I would like to have a frank talk with you today," said Comrade Kum Song, sitting down under a pine tree.

"What about?"

"It is a rather serious matter. We are studying at this Hwasong Uisuk School, devoting our precious time and energies every day. And each of us has his own wish, hasn't he? I would like to know yours."

"What are you so concerned about? If we don't study, how can we fight the Japs?"

"You think you can defeat the Japs if we do study like this at Hwasong Uisuk School? I agree that we are studying in order to beat the Japs. But tell me where is Hwasong Uisuk School different from the schools of old independence organisations? They set up similar schools and taught the same subjects we are learning now and gave the same military training. But they were unsuccessful and broke up."

"You are right. They are teaching us exactly the same things here at Hwasong Uisuk."

"Do they teach the same things only at Hwasong Uisuk? The 'Chongui-bu' is using the same method, isn't it? Is there any difference from the past? Is there any new policy or new method?"

Chang Dok Sun sighed, blinking his eyes. He, too, could see no possibility of the "Chongui-bu" beating the Japs, though they were scurrying around as if there were some great action ahead.

We had no arms or army. There was only a lot of noise. Could we win independence with a lot of noise like this? However wildly the drill instructor shrieked commands, it did not make the students believe in victory. Chang Dok Sun was a reticent youth, but it was clear that he, too, had his doubts. Now having heard Comrade Kum Song's views, he thought his scepticism was not unfounded. But he was cautious and would

not betray his inner beliefs too easily.

"But what can we do? They have been engaged in the independence movement for years, so they must have some plans, mustn't they?"

"I used to think so too but I'm afraid it's only wishful thinking."

"If what you say is true, it is a serious problem, isn't it? If matters stand that way, what can we do now?" Chang Dok Sun asked, blinking his large eyes as before.

"We must look for our own way. We must be brave enough to discard old ideas and ourselves blaze a new trail."

"What does it mean? Do you have any ideas of your own on this?" Chang Dok Sun was stunned and stared at Comrade Kum Song. Comrade Kum Song said calmly:

"If the Independence Army methods were wrong, might not that which they oppose be right? I have been reading books prohibited at Hwasong Uisuk."

"Books prohibited at Hwasong Uisuk? You mean Marxist literature?"

"Does that surprise you?"

"Why, you mean we should take the socialist road? If the independence movement has become inactive, we must try to put it back on the right track. How could we become socialists?" Chang Dok Sun shouted, glaring with blood-shot eyes.

"Why do you hate socialism so? In a nutshell, socialism means a system under which all forms of exploitation and oppression are eliminated for good and the workers and peasants live happily, and have the power in their own hands. Should we call this bad and reject it? Socialism is not a castle in the air; it has become a reality. Look at the Soviet Union, a sixth of our earth. As regards the independence of Korea, what sort of independence should we achieve, and for whom? We must decide that first. Suppose we won our independence by driving out the Japanese imperialist robbers. If that independence did not bring anything to the oppressed, what use would the new system be? In my opinion, only the road to socialism will truly guarantee independence and the liberation of the oppressed classes. I am sure of it. However, I am not going to force it on anybody. What I propose is that we should all of us seek justice. We must seek things new; surely it is ridiculous flatly to oppose a view even before knowing what it is. That kind of inertia is very harmful. The conservatives, unable to show us any effec-

tive road, have still persuaded us to believe all they say so that when they say that something is bad, we accept that without any confirmation. We young people should broaden our outlook, take a close look at the world and find our own way. We must not become frogs in the well, must not remain within the bounds of the outdated spiritual world of the Independence Army. Let us widen our horizons and seek the truth."

"But how can we accept a socialist or communist view? Communism has no regard for countries or nations. How could we take their road, when we are fighting for Korean independence?"

"You are only repeating those diehards' slander of socialism, slander that originated from the Japanese imperialists—and they are really afraid of socialism. Think about that. Those who are truly concerned for our country and our countrymen are the masses—people like ourselves, who are poor and downtrodden. How can it be unpatriotic to free the masses and make them well-to-do? What is a country anyway? It cannot exist without the masses. Surely this road to socialism, to communism, is a truly patriotic road, the road to love the people. It seems to me that only by becoming a real Communist can one be a true patriot."

Chang Dok Sun remained silent, pulling a pine cone apart. Waves were rising imperceptibly within his heart.

That night Chang Dok Sun was wakeful. Comrade Kum Song, who lay in the lower corner of the room occasionally looked towards Chang Dok Sun, who was tossing and turning in his bed. Chang Dok Sun turned towards the window where the moon threw the shadow of a tree to pretend to be asleep, and then turned over again to face Comrade Kum Song.

Comrade Kum Song obtained banned books, read them himself and lent them to Chang Dok Sun and Cho Hak Bong. Chang Dok Sun's hand trembled when he took the first. He did not read it right away; he put it into the desk drawer. He seemed to be deeply meditative.

"Why don't you want to read it?"

"Well, if communism is right, why did all the Independence Army oppose it? I have thought about it again and again, but I just don't understand," Chang Dok Sun replied.

"Don't be narrow-minded. Why do the top of the Independence Army oppose communism? They too have lost their country, but they are not so hard pressed as the masses who are

ragged and hungry. They all have money and rice-paddies and fields. So they fear communism lest they might lose their property. Another reason is that they are hidebound and stubborn, and not intelligent enough to take in new ideas. Nor are they strong enough to advance with the world so they stay in their bushes in an endeavour to do something. If you are sincerely concerned for Korea's independence and the welfare of the Korean nation, you should find out what this communism is about that people like so much and form your own judgement. Am I not right?"

Chang Dok Sun said nothing.

But next day he began to read the book he had kept in his desk drawer. Cho Hak Bong was already absorbed in his book; he read it zealously every day after school beside the brook or in the forest.

The number of readers gradually increased. Li Byong Mo, Yu Dae Yong and Hwang Hak in the other dormitory, too, started reading Marxist-Leninist literature on Comrade Kum Song's recommendation.

Around this time Pak Gwang Sik also joined the readers. The interest in Marxist literature spread like a prairie fire throughout Hwasong Uisuk School.

One day a student named Kim Bok Nam was caught by the drill instructor reading a book entitled *Karl Marx*, which Comrade Kum Song had lent. He confiscated it. Kim Bok Nam was very frightened and reported this to Comrade Kum Song.

"Where were you reading the book?"

"In the shadow of a tree behind the school at lunch time, when the drill instructor came up from behind and asked me what book it was. I hesitated, before I replied it was *Karl Marx*. I could not lie to him, because he would have looked through the book, you know. Then he snatched the book from me and left, and told me to come to the office."

"And did you go to?"

"I did. He asked me to tell him where I had got the book. So I just dropped my head and remained standing without a word. As I did not speak out, he hit his desk with his fist and asked if I wanted him to give me the 'leg screw' (an old form of torture in which the legs of a suspect were tied together and then twisted by two sticks inserted between them—Tr.). I said to him to go ahead if he wanted to. He paced up and down the

room for a long while, before he told me to go; he couldn't help it, I reckon."

"So the book was taken away?..."

"What could I do? I could not snatch the book from him.... But I am afraid the school authorities will not overlook this. They will try to find out where the book came from, and I fear you might have trouble. So I am going to run away from here tonight. How about it? If I flee, the case will be closed, won't it?"

"Where on earth are you going to flee to? For what crime should you flee? We are pursuing truth. If they persecute the youth who seek truth, it is they who are committing a crime. Don't be a coward, and stand firm."

Comrade Kum Song talked to Kim Bok Nam for a long time, advising him to throw out his chest and come to school boldly.

The next day Comrade Kum Song could not overlook the injustice done by the drill instructor. So he went into the school office to see the drill instructor. There he found the white-haired principal and the imposing superintendent. The drill instructor was talking to the geography teacher, shaking the book he had taken away from Kim Bok Nam.

"Why have you come? Are you working hard these days?" The principal asked looking up, as Comrade Kum Song bowed to him.

"Yes, I am studying hard, sir," replied Comrade Kum Song and walked up to the drill instructor.

"Sir, do you have the book left with you by Kim Bok Nam yesterday?"

"Left with me? I took it away from him. This is it." The drill instructor said and put the book angrily on the desk.

"That is my book. Please return it to me, sir."

"What? Is this yours? You mean you read *Karl Marx*?"

The drill instructor glared at him, thunderstruck.

"Why shouldn't I read *Karl Marx*, sir? We are students, so we must read all kinds of books to broaden our knowledge, mustn't we?"

"Young man, this is a communist book. Marx is the founder of communism, don't you know?"

"I know it, sir. If we are to study, we must acquaint ourselves with various ideological trends of the world, and in order to do this, we must read all kinds of books. We are dedicated to the independence movement to win back our country;

what can we do if we don't know Marx? At present every politician of the world is studying Marx's theory. If we are ignorant of it, it would be shameful, and it isn't possible to achieve independence that way."

As Comrade Kum Song said this, the principal and superintendent looked up and stared at him. They were surprised by his serious argument.

"But you are not allowed to read this kind of book here at Hwasong Uisuk. I don't know which politicians in the world read Marx, but you can't read his books at Hwasong Uisuk, do you hear? If you are affected by communist ideas reading this sort of book, our country will be ruined."

"Sir, unfortunately, we have no country to ruin, have we? And the prospect of the liberation of our lost country is remote. So, we, all of us Koreans, must read books and widen our knowledge, so as to seek a way to win our country back. Is it right to oppose Marx's theory just because it is communist, without reading it or trying to find out more about it? Who of Hwasong Uisuk has even tried to find out about it? I don't think it is right to prevent so many youths from pursuing truth, without trying to understand it. If you are to give us a sound education, you should give us students the freedom to read any book we want."

"What on earth are you talking about? Give you the freedom to read communist literature?" The principal asked, stopping fanning. Comrade Kum Song turned to him and answered.

"Sir, is it wrong for us students to ask for the freedom to read books? It seems to me that education at Hwasong Uisuk is too limited. There is nothing new for us students to obtain. And that is not confined to Hwasong Uisuk; it is painful, indeed, to think that this education reflects the defects of the Korean independence movement."

"How dare you say so? The defects of the Korean independence movement?" The principal slapped his knees and jumped to his feet. The superintendent, geography teacher and drill instructor were all staring wide-eyed at Comrade Kum Song.

"Please don't be shocked, sir, and do think it over," he continued in a stern voice. "Everybody is really working hard for Korea's independence, but, in my opinion, they are sticking to outworn views and methods within too narrow bounds, not knowing how to look at what is happening around them."

"Sticking to outworn views and methods—what on earth

do you mean? You mean 'Chongui-bu', too, is sticking to its old views and methods? They have raised a new banner and, as we see, they are working."

"What is 'Chongui-bu' doing? Anything different from the independence movement of the past? There is a lot of sabre-rattling, but really, what is the difference? I can't see a single one. Do they have any new policies, new tactics or methods? The Japs have brought an army division into Korea; they are using cannons and airplanes even. Do we have the strength to resist them? And have we any plan by which we might defeat them? In my opinion, we have none. Numerous people have sacrificed their lives to the independence of Korea. Not long ago Li Chil Bok, my landlady's son gave his life to the independence movement. And how many more gallant sons and daughters of Korea will lay down theirs? Well, when they call these young people to the battlefield to die, do they really have a banner that contains any doctrine worthy of sacrificing so many lives? Do they have any plan? If you put up a vague slogan of 'You just fight' and drive the precious patriotic souls to death, is that not a useless and dangerous adventure, nay, a crime?"

His voice became fiercer and his look sterner. Then he turned away his face and, in a rather softened voice, continued.

"Of course, I know, sir, you can't sleep at night, because you are so concerned about our country's destiny. However, if you think it is only you teachers who are concerned about the nation's destiny, while other people are indifferent, you are mistaken. The right to love our country is not the privilege of a few in the independence movement. Though we are only students yet, we too are unable to sleep at night, racking our brains for ways and means to win back our lost country. Therefore, we argue hotly with each other and study international development and ideological trends of every hue. But what is wrong with that?"

The principal who had opposed him was now at a loss for words. The superintendent, geography teacher and drill instructor were also struck dumb. Comrade Kum Song turned to the drill instructor.

"Please give me back my book, sir!"

"You can't have it. You can't. It seems to me that you are preaching communism to us."

The drill instructor rose fiercely to his feet. The principal shouted at him to sit down, his white beard quivering.

Staring at the drill instructor's brows frowning Comrade Kum Song said.

"Sir, truth does not consist of blustering. Why should you talk so rudely to the students? Please don't just push your views; show us how to win back our country, we are suffering the sorrow of a stateless people even in our dreams. Please give the light of truth to us who are groping on the dark and rugged road. Then we all will race along that road."

Having said this, he picked up his book which lay on the drill instructor's desk, and went out without a word. The over-awed instructor only looked at the principal's face. Soon there was a heated discussion in the office.

The teachers were all talking, lamenting that their most reliable student was going astray. But the principal was utterly crestfallen and said nothing; only his beard trembled. His eyes were dimmed by tears.

A few days later, Comrade Kum Song was called by the principal. The drill instructor was also in the office.

"What you said the other day is not without sense. That we must admit. As you said, you are not reading the book to become a Communist. We can believe that, can we not?" the principal asked, with his face flushed. The drill instructor seated on his chair, his chest thrown out, kept blowing out cigarette smoke. Anger still lingered about his face.

"I shall do all I can not to run counter to the hopes of my fellow countrymen."

"That night all of us teachers had a long discussion about you. So don't betray our expectations and study hard. As you say, it is useful to know about communism. Because you can fight it firmly, if you know it. And please don't circulate your books to other students."

Comrade Kum Song wanted to say that such books had to be read by all students so that they could have knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, but on second thoughts he decided he had better not.

Bowing to the principal and drill instructor he left the office.

All the students were surprised at the fact that Comrade Kum Song had got back his *Karl Marx*, but most of all Chang Dok Sun, who stared at him with his eyes even bigger than usual. The students talked a lot about it as if it were an extraordinary event. Now, they felt that they had complete freedom to study communism.

The students' reading fever increased quickly. They debated energetically. Seething with revolutionary passion, the students were swept by a radical view that the landlords and capitalists had to be overthrown right away and a socialist society built. All of them were in a cauldron as if they were armed with sharp weapons.

However, Comrade Kum Song had a heavy agony at heart. He was at a loss how to link reality with the theory he had learned, how to set the immediate goal of the Korean revolution and how to lead the revolution.

One evening he went to Kim Bok Nam's lodgings. There, many students were having a debate, a picket placed outside the house. One student was saying that they should beat the capitalists first, and another stressed that all propertied people without exception had to be overthrown because they were exploiters. Some students claimed that the old society must be destroyed completely, and others suggested to strike at the Five Traitors of the Ulsa (who were responsible for the 1905 treaty that led to the annexation of Korea to Japan—Tr.). Still others proposed that both nobles and feudal rulers also be overthrown. And Chang Dok Sun who was sitting in a corner roared why should we not crush the Japs. He had become a devoted Marxist-Leninist student now. Big-built, he sat in an audacious attitude, listened to the debate, making comments once in a while in weighty tones.

"We must hit the Japs, too. But in the class struggle we must attach importance to the problem of hitting the landlord and capitalist classes." Yu Dae Yong said in reply to Chang Dok Sun.

For a long time Comrade Kum Song only listened to the debate. And this debate increased his agony. Every argument contained some grain of reason.

If we are to make revolution in Korea we must hit the Japs as well as the capitalists and feudal nobles. However, Marx proposed the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat as the primary task of the proletarian revolution, and when it was carried out, it was possible to build socialism. So, how to solve the problem? However hard I rack my brains, I fear such a simple method would not enable us to make revolution in Korea under Japanese occupation. How, then, should we apply Marxist-Leninist theory and begin the revolution in Korea?

He went out into the dark road and walked.

He groped for days, without food or sleep. One day he suddenly recalled his father's words about the inclination of Korean youth towards foreign ideas.

"They worship the Confucian scholars and philosophers of the East, and then they worship other foreign philosophies; they aspire for the Confucian classics and the works by Eastern sages and then discard them to turn to other foreign ideas believing in them like scripture. How regrettable! If you learn this country's philosophy today like a parrot and another country's tomorrow, how can you establish your national identity?" his father had lamented to a young man from Seoul.

Comrade Kum Song thought there was truth in his father's words.

You must not apply Marxism-Leninism mechanically. You must establish your identity....

This truth gave Comrade Kum Song much greater confidence. He studied and studied Marxism-Leninism. He obtained and read books on economic conditions in Korea and read piles of newspapers and magazines, taking copious notes, jotting down figures and making many calculations.

One early morning he came out, elated. He had sat up all night, but his intelligent eyes shone brightly. His whole body was warm.

I must not swallow Marxism-Leninism whole, I must adopt the fundamental principle. Basing myself on this principle, I must consider the road the Korean revolution should follow. I must apply Marxist-Leninist principles to our country's situation, and on these principles the Korean revolution has to be carried out. The Japanese imperialists are occupying Korea; Korean society is colonial and semi-feudal; capitalism is not yet developed here. Unless these conditions are taken into account, the Korean revolution is impossible. So we must begin by fighting the Japanese imperialist aggressors. Dealing with Japanese imperialism is the primary task of the Korean revolution. This means achieving national independence as well as beating our class enemy. Who are the landlords and capitalists in our Korea? They are either Japs or their accomplices, traitors to our nation. Therefore, we must strike at the Japanese imperialists first and then bring about our class liberation. In this way we must build a socialist and communist society. Then where should we begin? We must form an organisation. That is our immediate task. Organisation, organisation—we must form a Marxist-Leninist

organisation which will fight to overthrow Japanese imperialism and emancipate the exploited classes.

However, the storm of history was still whirling slowly at the bottom of life and waiting for a moment to erupt. All things were being prepared one by one meticulously for the birth of the new.

Thus one evening in late autumn, a historic meeting was held at Kim Bok Nam's lodgings that ushered in the beginning of a great revolutionary history and the Down-with-Imperialism Union was formed whose guiding compass was Marxism-Leninism.

That was how the first revolutionary seeds were planted.

CHAPTER III

SNOWSTORM OVER CHIANGNAN PARK

1

With the conference on the merger of three groups approaching, the representatives of "Chongui-bu", "Chamui-bu" and "Sinmin-bu", the nationalist organisations, as well as Korean residents in east Manchuria, the General Federation of the Youth and Korean residents in north Manchuria started to arrive at Kirin. The town was alive and seething. "Chongui-bu" had been holding preliminary meetings of cadres every day before the conference.

Today again old Li Gap Mu and other leaders of "Chongui-bu" gathered in the parlour of Paek Rak Jin's and argued all day long.

"It is not too much to say that if the forthcoming coalition does not come off, the independence movement will cease to exist. Therefore in my opinion, we of 'Chongui-bu' must not be too tough in our demands, so that the merger conference does not run into trouble."

Paek Rak Jin gave this warning at this as he had at previous sessions. The passionate utterances made by the leaders of "Chongui-bu" had made him uneasy. They said that at all costs they must achieve their demands and take control. Paek Rak Jin tried hard to put some breaks on their aggressiveness.

"Do you mean then, that we should give up all our demands?"

"We must lay down definite principles and then compromise as far as these permit. 'Chamui-bu' and 'Sinmin-bu' will undoubtedly also have demands, so each party must negotiate on the basis of their demands, and try to reach a compromise." Paek Rak Jin returned to Li Pil Su with the goatee

beard. With his robust face and sleek wavy hair, Paek was a man of unquenchable energy.

"Mr. Paek, you mean that we must compromise over control? That is impossible. We should not worry as much as that about the possibility of failing to form a coalition." The fat So Gun Ha cut in again.

"In my opinion, it would be better to map out our policy in accordance with Mr. Paek's views. We must not make a mess of a great cause by being too stubborn over trifles." Old Li Gap Mu commented, shaking his grey beard which hung down over his chest.

"What could be more important for us than control?"

"What is most important is to form a united body and activate the independence movement." Old Li Gap Mu rebuked So Gun Ha sternly. Whenever an extreme proposal was put forward, the old man, seated in the place of honour, warned that they must strive for the great cause of merging the three groups, that they must be ready to sacrifice "Chongui-bu" itself.

All day the parlour was filled with tobacco smoke. Paek Rak Jin had worked hard to prepare a draft plan for both the central and the local structure of the new united body and he had intended to submit the draft for discussion today, but he changed his mind.

"I'm damned sure this independence movement will be ruined by dissension and by squabbles over power," thought Paek Rak Jin, angrily.

As each party was holding preliminary consultations in Kirin, they received a piece of news: An Muk, formerly a leader of the "Provisional Government in Shanghai" and now in the Hungsadan society, was coming to Kirin via Peking. At this the members of the independence movement gathered in the town were as excited as if they were expecting a President. The "Chongui-bu" officials meeting in Paek Rak Jin's parlour were no exception; they talked noisily about An Muk. Paek Rak Jin alone made no comment. He had a deep hatred for An Muk's belief in relying on external forces, and he even thought ill of old Li Gap Mu who was now busy praising An Muk.

In fact, An Muk was a self-styled leader of the Korean nationalist movement. He had taken part in the movement in the days of the Independence Society in Seoul before Korea was annexed by Japan, before he went abroad to work. He then came

home again and set up a number of schools, while working in the nationalist movement. Before the annexation, the Japanese imperialists had tried to persuade An Muk to head the old Korean government. An Muk had refused and gone abroad again.

This was the man who was now coming from America and it was natural that the independence movement workers should pin some hopes on him.

"Don't be so optimistic, Mr. Li. What has Mr. An Muk's coming to Kirin to do with a conference to merge the three groups? Do you think he is coming to help the conference? He is coming here with his Hungsadan society policies. Will the new united body accept the Hungsadan policy? At all costs 'Chongui-bu' must have control."

Yu Sang Jo, in a dark overcoat carrying a shiny stick, who had come out of Paek Rak Jin's parlour whispered to Li Pil Su who walked by his side. Li Pil Su walked on, pretending not to hear him. Yu Sang Jo whispered again:

"Well, I don't care whether Mr. An Muk comes or not. But, to my mind, the real problem is the attitude Mr. Li Gap Mu is taking. Why does he keep telling us how 'Chongui-bu' must compromise even before the conference has opened? How can we get control like this?"

"That's because of Paek Rak Jin and Chong Min Su, you know," Li Pil Su said disgusted.

"Then 'Chongui-bu' must exclude such forces. How can we hold a merger meeting with them?"

Li Pil Su did not return. He was not satisfied with "Chongui-bu" itself being bent on unity, instead of taking specific measures to gain control at the merger conference. However, he could not agree to Yu Sang Jo's suggestion. It was impossible to exclude Paek Rak Jin or Chong Min Su, for the exclusion of such central figures would disorganise "Chongui-bu" itself.

They walked down the dark, deserted street. Occasionally, Yu Sang Jo stole a look at Li Pil Su's buoyant profile, widening his eyes behind his tortoiseshell glasses. He wanted to continue the conversation, but he remained silent because Li Pil Su seemed indifferent to his comments.

In fact, the owner of the tortoiseshell glasses was a black sheep. He was a secret agent of the "Government-General in Korea". His father was a traitor to the nation, who had secured high position in the old Korean government under the patron-

age of treacherous ministers, and had done his share in bringing in the Japanese imperialists, for which he had been given vast sums of money by the Japanese government. Thanks to his father's contribution to selling out Korea, Yu Sang Jo had gone over to Japan to live in luxury, and had studied there at university. When he had graduated, he had come back to Korea and got a job with the "Government-General". He had served at the "Government-General" for a year, and then been assigned by the Director of the Police Bureau to spy on the Korean independence movement in Kirin. So here he was, sneaking around among the independence movement workers.

After parting with Li Pil Su, Yu Sang Jo held his walking cane in the other hand and trekked down the road running along the Sungari River. As he was going past Choe Jin Guk's house, Choe Jin Guk's mother was coming up the road, carrying a large dish with pig feed in it.

"Oh, shall I help you put it down?"

"Oh, no, sir. Don't soil your clothes."

"I don't mind."

Yu Sang Jo placed his walking stick on the earthen porch and took the dish down in one go.

"Thank you, indeed, sir."

"Don't mention it. Do the students study in the next room these days?"

"Yes, once in a while. They say they are reading a novel or something, and make a fuss."

"Ha, ha. Quite natural. They are young."

Yu Sang Jo took up the walking stick and went down the sloping road.

I shouldn't have told him that, should I? thought Choe Jin Guk's mother, remaking her chignon, with the brass ornamental hairpin between her lips. That man asked the same question the other day. It's strange, indeed.

An Muk arrived at Kirin. His train got into the station at dusk. There was a hubbub on the square in front of the station, where the nationalists and students under their influence were waiting for An Muk. Everybody was looking towards the barrier. Presently An Muk emerged, surrounded by Li Gap Mu, leader of "Chongui-bu", Sim Hak, leader of "Chamui-bu", Choe Hwal of the "Provisional Government in Shanghai" and Pastor Li Son Yop. An Muk's high black hat was conspicuous among

the passengers bursting out through the barrier. Pastor Li Son Yop was close behind An Muk. The fair-faced pastor was a head shorter than the other. An Muk shook hands with each of the nationalists who had been waiting for him on the square. He was followed by two young men, one of them carrying a shiny leather bag and a trunk, the other holding An Muk's hat and walking stick. An Muk wore a dark overcoat and a pair of pointed shoes. His oiled hair was parted on the left and his neatly trimmed moustache was also parted. There was a strong smell of perfume about him. After shaking hands with the nationalists he went over to the students. He smiled and raised his hand at them and withdrew.

"Respected and dependable friends!"

He started his speech to the crowd of people who were watching him. Li Gap Mu, Sim Hak, Choe Hwal, and Li Son Yop stood beside him, and took off their hats to listen reverently to his speech. Also among them was Li Gwang Jin, leader of "Sinmin-bu", whose moustache twisted up almost to the corners of his eyes. Pastor Li Son Yop and Choe Hwal's expressions were particularly grave and reverent. Occasionally Li Son Yop gave a slight cough and involuntarily brought his pocket handkerchief to the corners of his eyes.

"Thanks to your kindly care I have had the honour of visiting many places since my tour to America. My current visit is aimed at having frank discussions with my fellow-countrymen about Korean independence, our cherished desire. At present the spirit of regeneration and liberty is overflowing in all countries. This shows that the ideal of all humanity is dynamically sweeping away the aftermath of the war in Europe and advancing all the time. But at this moment our Korea...."

"Sir, it's very cold; would it not be better to make it brief?" whispered Pastor Li Son Yop as the speaker was about to move on to the main subject. An Muk nodded. Some of the students clicked their tongues, sorry to hear Li Son Yop's unwelcome suggestion. The students had been anxious to hear what he had to say. But An Muk only spoke for another three minutes. Amid the applause of the crowd, he put on his hat that one of the accompanying youth handed to him and gravely took back the walking stick. Old Li Gap Mu and Sim Hak led him to a waiting rickshaw. On the vehicle An Muk lightly touched his pretty moustache with his finger tips and looked towards the town which now lay in semi-darkness.

Then Li Gap Mu, Sim Hak and other leaders of the three groups got into their rickshaws. Li Son Yop shouted at the driver of An Muk's rickshaw to go past the Japanese consulate, instead of going towards Chaoyang Gate. Pastor Li Son Yop was more excited than anybody else. He seemed to think that Korea was going to win independence right now and An Muk was on his way to attend the ceremony to be inaugurated as Korea's first President. So he wanted to show their dignified air to the Japs entrenched in the consulate and stun them.

"You blackguards, look at the dignity of the Korean nation!" Li Son Yop got more and more excited.

An Muk's rickshaw led a string of rickshaws carrying the Independence Army leaders. Only the students went on foot, making a lot of noise. The rickshaws bypassed the street leading to Chaoyang Gate and ran on, overlooking the Japanese quarters. The Independence Army leaders seated on the swaying rickshaws glared at the glass windows of the Japanese consulate glittering in the setting sun. Li Gwang Jin with his bristly moustache glared around with a sharper eye. Now and then he twisted his moustache. An Muk's expression changed a little as he saw the Japanese flag fluttering on the top of the consulate building. His smile died out and his eyes became piercing and cold. Only old Li Gap Mu and Sim Hak pretended to see nothing, their long beards quivering. There was not a shadow in the street that ran across the Japanese settlement. The doors of stores were tightly shut. None of them said a word as they ran past the Japanese consulate. Only the rickshaw wheels rattled over the cracking ice.

2

On the evening of the day An Muk arrived in Kirin, Comrade Kum Song left for Gi Jun's on the outskirts of the town. He had received a message that the railway yard workers' Marxist-Leninist study group was going to hold its first meeting. He was about to go out of the gate when Chang Dok Sun came hurrying in.

"Has anything happened?" asked Comrade Kum Song, walking into the street with Chang Dok Sun.

"Did you hear that An Muk has come to Kirin?"

"I did."

"I went to the railway station today with my colleagues. An Muk received a rousing welcome."

"Why not? How can the nationalists neglect his reception? They worship him like a President."

"Not only the nationalists. Quite a few students were there and loudly acclaimed his speech in front of the station. I fear that he will have a bad influence on the students. And they say he is going to speak at a big meeting soon. I don't know what he is going to say, but if his speech is harmful to the Korean revolution and he wins popularity, it will be bad."

"Ha ha ha. Let's not be frightened. He might be popular for a while. But how can the students take a road that will not lead them to truth? Well, what about the study group at your Vocational School?"

"They started work last night."

"How many members do you have?"

"Nine. And another is coming this evening."

"Then hurry up and go. You must guide them properly and secretly. We don't try to win popularity through vociferous lecturing tours. We must steadily infiltrate at the bottom and rally our forces by awakening them to truth. We shall stick to our method."

After parting with Chang Dok Sun, Comrade Kum Song hurried past the Army Headquarters. The wind rustled through the branches of the trees that lined the street. The pavement was also snowbound and the ice crackled underfoot. But he did not feel cold at all. He felt strong and refreshed. As he entered Gi Jun's yard, the master of the house was already waiting for him by the shed. Gi Jun shook Comrade Kum Song's hand with both his and whispered.

"All but one are here."

"Let's go in."

"But I must tell you one thing now."

"What is it?"

"Well...." Gi Jun was hesitant before he added. "Besides those I told you about the other day, there is another."

"Who is it?"

"A young lad named Li Song Nam; he is a stoker at the locomotive depot. He is boarding with me."

"Then we will have to trust him. Let him attend."

"But he is very young. When I told him about you, he stubbornly insisted that he must join in the study group at all costs.... So I just brought him here."

"Youth does not matter. That's all right. Youngsters are so pure-hearted and enterprising that they participate in the revolution zealously and can develop quickly."

Gi Jun seemed relieved and walked quickly to the earthen porch and opened the door, giving a loud cough. The door was so low that he had to bend his head down.

As Comrade Kum Song entered the room, the young men who were gathered under an oil lamp that was sending up sooty smoke, jumped to their feet.

"Comrades, this is Comrade Kum Song whom you have been so anxious to meet. He has come here to guide us at the first session of the locomotive depot workers' Marxist-Leninist study group."

Gi Jun introduced Comrade Kum Song reverently, as if reciting a prepared statement. Each of the youths shook hands with Comrade Kum Song. Li Song Nam who had an emaciated face elbowed aside a youngster to shake hands.

"Oh, you are Comrade Li Song Nam? And you really work as a stoker?" Comrade Kum Song asked, his smile suddenly fading.

Li Song Nam smiled, opening his pale lips, because he was so glad that Comrade Kum Song had noticed him first. The down that covered his yellow face and his sparse teeth made him look still younger.

"How old are you?" inquired Comrade Kum Song in a heavy tone of voice, still stroking the young boy's hand.

"Thirteen," replied Song Nam, flustered.

"Thirteen...."

That was young indeed, and he was undergrown.

"So you mean you handle a large shovel?"

"We have tried to stop him, but he makes desperate efforts to do it," explained Choe Gi Jun.

"Um...."

Only then did Comrade Kum Song let go of Song Nam's hand. The air of the room had suddenly become oppressive. Comrade Kum Song's heart ached as if he had touched the bloody wound of the downtrodden homeland.

"I am very glad that Comrade Li Song Nam has joined the ranks of Kirin's workers gathered here resolved to make a rev-

olution. He is doing a job that is hard even for grown-ups. How heroic he is! I wish I could show those well-clothed, well-fed children of the rich how Comrade Li Song Nam, a son of our working class, is growing up to be a revolutionary fighter. What do you say about that?" As soon as Comrade Kum Song had said this, changing his mood, the oppressive atmosphere was gone and all present felt themselves warming up. One of the youths poked his fingers into Song Nam's ribs and whispered something. The blood rose to Song Nam's face.

"Now let's sit down," said Comrade Kum Song in a vigorous tone of voice and looked around. But the young men were hesitant.

"Why are you standing like that? Come on, let's sit down here."

He sat down first, pushing youths standing beside him down by their shoulders. Only then did they move to sit down. The oil lamp kept sending out the sooty smoke, that curled up into the air. There was a tiny window in the back wall to let the smoke out, but the room was still smoky and everybody felt a choking in his throat. The smoke rose so heavily that one of the young men pushed down the wick with the large needle attached to the lamp stand. The smoke thinned down, but so did the light.

At this moment the young man who had been reported absent opened the door and showed himself up without a word.

"Did anybody see you coming to my house?" Gi Jun asked the young man.

"Nobody saw me. But, did Sok Pil come? Oh, there you are. Why did you sneak off by yourself? I am late because I was having trouble trying to stop a fight between Pockmark and his wife. The damned dog was drunken like a skunk and...." The young man grumbled and walked across the room, without noticing Comrade Kum Song's presence. As Gi Jun introduced him to Comrade Kum Song as Cha Duk Bo, the foundry worker, the new comer collected himself hastily.

"O I beg your pardon."

"Not at all. Sit down please."

Comrade Kum Song shook hands with him and drew him to his side. As the big Cha Duk Bo took his place, everybody shifted up to make room for him. Cha Duk Bo was good-looking, with a round face and button nose.

"Comrade Kum Song, there are eleven in all. Here you are," Gi Jun passed him a piece of paper which contained the roster.

It was a sheet of a large notebook on which their names, occupations and ages were written. There were two foundry workers, one assistant engine driver (Gi Jun), four stokers, one turner, and three engine repairmen. Gi Jun explained that most of the eleven had been workers in various places from their early years.

For a while Comrade Kum Song asked them about their past lives. When it came to Li Song Nam, his inquiries were somewhat more detailed.

"Well, where did your father die?"

"Down in the coal mines," Song Nam faltered out, with his head dropped.

"He died in the pit with my father. The roof caved in, and they never even found the bodies." Cha Duk Bo said this casually, raising his head. It seemed that he felt it was no use shedding tears or rending his heart over a thing that was past.

Having acquainted himself with the backgrounds of all the youths, Comrade Kum Song asked about their education. Only Gi Jun, Cha Duk Bo and another stoker were literate.

"So, most of you are unlettered, eh? Well, that is quite natural...." But his heart was some pained.

"Now, comrades, let us start this way for the present. Comrade Gi Jun and the other lettered comrades must help the unlettered comrades. Korean is easy to learn, so you will learn it very quickly. Let us study hard like the working class."

"But do you think you can learn it, you lot?" inquired Cha Duk Bo, staring around.

"Comrade Cha, let's not talk like that. Revolutionary comrades call each other comrade."

As Comrade Kum Song rebuked him smilingly, Cha Duk Bo blushed and grinned.

"I'm used to it. Then, comrades, you think you can do it?"

Cha Duk Bo was as simple-hearted and frank as ever.

"Just teach me. I think I can learn it if I work as hard as when I carry the loads on my back."

"I can read a little."

The young men replied, their eyes brightening now.

"If you can read, you will learn the faster," said Comrade Kum Song and went on. "You must learn it quickly. Learning the language is not a privilege of a race apart. Everybody can and must learn. Particularly you comrades must learn; you must study the Marxist-Leninist teaching to make a revolution in Korea. And for that you must be lettered. I would like to stress again that

you should regard learning the alphabet and reading books as a working-class struggle against the Japanese imperialists, the landlords and capitalists. Why are we uneducated and unlettered? We workers are clever people with as much talent and wisdom as anybody else. Without us workers, people could not live a single day. Workers make food and clothes and create everything in the civilized world. Our working class have inexhaustible power and skill. But we had to work until our bones were bent before school age. This is a result of the Japanese imperialist policy of keeping us Koreans uneducated so as to keep us in slavery for ever. If you learn your letters, you become awakened, and if you are awakened you unite, resist, revolt, so they want to keep us Koreans unlettered. Therefore, our struggle to learn our mother tongue and awaken ourselves is a revolutionary struggle."

Comrade Kum Song stopped and looked round at the young men. Cha Duk Bo watched wide-eyed. Everyone looked serious.

"We must learn our language and pick up that sharp scalpel we call Marxism-Leninism and dissect this rotten capitalist society; and must hit and overthrow the enemy. Then we must set up a happy and free socialist society on the ruins of imperialism, a society in which there is no oppression and exploitation. So, whether we workers pick up this weapon called Marxism-Leninism or not is decisive to our liberation from the oppression of capital. The Korean working class is still young. But they suffer from unusually unhuman oppression and exploitation. Here is a typical example. At your depot you carry the coal and keep fire more than 12 hours a day. But your families are ragged and hungry and you yourselves are kicked out when you fall ill. Moreover, you are subject to intolerable national insult. Then, how long should we remain in this plight? Should we live oppressed and downtrodden until our last dying day? Well, what do you think about it? What do you think we should do, Comrade Cha Duk Bo?"

"Yes...needless to say. I think we must beat up and drive all the Japs away."

"And you?" Comrade Kum Song asked a youth seated across from him.

"Yes, I think so, too. If each of us workers take care of a couple of dozens of Japs, it will do."

"A couple of dozens each? Ha ha. Not a bad idea."

There was a burst of laughter in the room.

"That is a good resolve. But when you want to climb a mountain, you must have a definite plan: how to break through the woods and which road to take. This is particularly important because we have to push out formidable Japanese imperialist forces. We must have ways and means, we must have a method to hit at the Japs. Can any of you explain it?"

This time nobody could answer.

"You are not sure about it? Ha ha ha. See? You have a firm resolve, but you don't know how to fight and win. We must learn method. There is nothing special about it. That is to learn Marxist-Leninist teaching and firmly unite all workers under the banner of Marxism-Leninism. Once the working class are united as firmly as a rock, they needn't fear police, army, prison and the gallows. You must remember that unity is might. We a dozen or so persons seated in this room are united today, and tomorrow a hundred, a thousand the day after and then ten thousand—then we shall be able to regain the lost country and set up our power."

He spoke in an earnest tone of voice: We must wake up, unite, go forward shoulder to shoulder. Each word of his was earnest and warm. The eyes in which the lamplight flickered were dim with tears. Li Song Nam brought his coat sleeve up to his eyes.

Nobody had ever heard this sort of story. And they had never thought so seriously about their lot. They had wandered about in this cold, cold world, but they had never thought about why they should live like that. They simply thought that was how things were. Each looked back at his own past: sometimes he cried at a crowded building site because the overseer had kicked his belly; while he was carrying a heavy piece of rail he had staggered and fallen down, and cried out as it hit his ankle; had trembled on a cold drizzly field and longed for home; had seen his father dying; or buried his younger brother. All these thoughts came back and choked their hearts.

"Don't weep. You cannot solve these things by crying. You all must cheer up and have a strong resolve to be in the van of the revolution."

The young men did not stop crying, however. All of them shed tears. Cha Duk Bo wiped his eyes with the towel he carried by his side.

It was late at night, when the meeting was over. Comrade Kum Song took Gi Jun out of the house and asked him quietly.

"Comrade Gi Jun, do you have a repair and maintenance shop at your depot?"

"We have. A big one."

"Then, couldn't you have Comrade Song Nam work there as a trainee?"

Gi Jun could not say anything for a few moments.

"We cannot be indifferent to such a young comrade withering away, pressed down by the coal bucket. Who will look after him if we don't? I'll be responsible for his studies."

"I'll find out at the depot tomorrow. Anyway I'll try my best to get him switched to a lighter job."

Gi Jun was ashamed of himself; he had thought he was taking care of Song Nam like his own brother. He had a lump in his throat at the thought that Comrade Kum Song was so considerate and had such a loving care for the workers' plight.

"Be sure you do it."

"I will."

After parting with Gi Jun, Comrade Kum Song walked along the dark back-alley. He could not rid himself of a heavy heart. He still felt the soft and tender touch of that young hand. That hand that looked so pitiable. It reminded him of the rickshawman's hands, as rough as the back of a tortoise. With the pennies on his huge rough hand, he had entreated the passenger to give him some more pennies, saying that were it not for his starved children he would let him ride on his rickshaw free.... O how enraged he had been that night because of the unerasably sad figure of the rickshawman. When he had returned to his lodgings, Sin Dong Ho was perfecting his *Self-portrait* at his desk. Comrade Kum Song could not understand why he was trying to portray his face full of grief in the present reality where blood was spilt and tears shed. Why couldn't he write a poem that would arouse resistance to this molesting society filled with contradictions? Couldn't you explode your hatred at the society where man oppresses man, the society where you had to beg for a penny for your driving the rickshaw, your high-cheek boned yellow face perspiring profusely, at the detestable shiny wallet, at the fat, greasy face? Couldn't you write such a poem? Comrade Kum Song had come out, feeling so sad and grieved. He went out to the Sungari River in the vain hope that he might feel refreshed. Why was the water frozen, instead of rippling and flowing? The thick ice made him think as if capitalist society, pressing men down with something heavy, like the ice, was

bleeding them white. He felt as if the blue ice he saw and the chain of capital were forming one monstrous mass. The hand reappeared on the ice. There were two pennies on the huge hand as rough and tough as horsehide; and the hand was uplifted and quivering in the air, asking for more pennies. Hand, why couldn't you throw the pennies away and take hold of that fat neck? And why couldn't you crash the thick ice that holds you down, with your iron fists? For when you crashed through the ice, capitalist society would be overthrown; liberty would surge through the new world and you would be assured of complete freedom from such drudgery?

He walked along the riverbank for a long time, but his heart remained heavy. His indignation did not wane. But he had never expected that this other hand, equally oppressed, would fill his heart with indignation tonight. And again tonight he thought he could not but writhe because of the touch of that soft and tender hand. He was in a fury. How could I allow this contradiction to last? Can I live without trying to end such tragedy? I must crush it. I must smite this topsy-turvy society, and soon.

Excited, but also feeling the weight of responsibility on his shoulders, he emerged into a street flooded with starlight.

3

A few days after An Muk's appearance in Kirin a big lecture meeting was held at Pastor Li Son Yop's chapel. An Muk was going to give a lecture on the nationalist movement.

That morning Pastor Li was very busy, making his family sweep the courtyard and scrub the chapel floor. He was very elated. He believed that An Muk would become President when the country won its independence. Therefore, he thought today's lecture a great event that would be recorded in golden letters in the nation's annals.

People flocked in from early morning. Various dignitaries and those who were under the influence of the Independence Army besieged the place. Some were in Western clothes, others in Korean and some carried walking sticks. The uncle of O Bo Bae, a Chinese linguist, wore the *turumagi* and a lacquered horsehair hat. Dignitaries from adjacent areas bustled in by train. Quite a few people came in rickshaws from the railway station.

Many students also came. When the chapel was almost full to capacity, the representatives who had come for the conference on the merger of the three groups entered in fine array. Li Gwang Jin had done up his moustache more neatly than ever. The tips of the pitch-black moustache, which looked as if oiled, were as pointed as the tips of writing brushes—everybody had to give it a second look. The chapel was tight packed with people, the whole rear with students. Comrade Kum Song was seated in the corner at the back, talking to a student. Chang Dok Sun, Pak Gwang Sik and Choe Jin Guk were also there among the students.

After a long time, old Li Gap Mu and Sim Hak, and Choe Hwal entered the chapel following in the wake of the slender An Muk. Behind them came Paek Rak Jin, Li Pil Su with his goatee, the corpulent So Gun Ha, Chong Min Su and Yu Sang Jo, dressed smartly in a dark blue Western suit, bringing up the rear.

In the chapel An Muk lightly raised his hat to the audience with a refined gesture as he went to take his seat. Scores of people seated on the chairs in the front rows all rose to their feet. They surrounded An Muk, who was still standing and made a lot of noise. The rim of O Bo Bae's uncle's glittering horsehair hat touched the ears of people standing around him. Pastor Li Son Yop lost no time in leading An Muk to a large armchair. And only then did the people all sit down in their places.

An Muk touched his elegant moustache with his finger tips for a moment. His lips were as red as if he had used lipstick and his mouth looked very small. It was quite surprising that a flood of oratory should burst out of such a tiny mouth.

Meanwhile, at this very moment, in a special train from Mukden to Kirin, Kunihiro, special emissary of the "Government-General in Korea" was seated on a sofa, reading an intelligence report from Yu Sang Jo. Yu Sang Jo had written a detailed report on the situation in Kirin in his tiny hand on two sheets of ruled paper. His report told of what the conference on the three group merger was going to discuss, and how it was getting on. Also detailed were the demands and moves of every group, and the moves made by individuals such as Li Gap Mu, Paek Rak Jin, Li Gwang Jin, Sim Hak, Choe Hwal. The information on Paek Rak Jin was particularly thorough and there were reference to the communist movement led by Wol Pa and Choe Gon, though this passage was quite brief. The reporter gave a relatively

lengthy report on An Muk's arrival in Kirin. Yu Sang Jo said that An's arrival would definitively have a positive influence on the forthcoming merger conference, and he deemed it necessary to dispose of him if they were to disorganise the conference. Kuni-hiko had read this particular part of the report at Mukden, so he read with little interest now. But he paid more serious attention to a piece of information attached to the report.

"There is a new development in Kirin now. I am writing this because it is considered especially important. An interest in reading Marxist and Leninist literature is spreading fast among the students in Kirin, and Marxist-Leninist study groups are springing up like mushrooms after rain. There are Communists such as Wol Pa or Choe Gon here under the 'General Bureau of the Korean Communist Party in Manchuria', but they have never spread the Marxist-Leninist teaching on such a scale. It is known that the new development is not their doing, but comes from those who organised a communist organization named 'DIU' in Huatien last year. They have appeared here and are spreading Marxist-Leninist doctrine among the students. This is certainly a dangerous force that should not be overlooked. I shall send some information about it and its leader later on. But it is deemed advisable for you to be mindful of this development and take measures and facilitate the work from different angles."

"The 'DIU'?" Kunihiko thought for a while. To which group does this organization belong? He was well acquainted with the situation in the Korean communist movement, knew it like the palm of his hand, but the DIU sounded strange to him. Maybe Yu Sang Jo was overstating the importance of this force.

"Akita, what sort of character is this Yu Sang Jo?" Kunihiko asked Akita, the secret agent of the "Government-General in Korea" who sat at his side.

"Yes, sir. He graduated from university in Japan and worked as official of the Government-General before we picked him out," replied Akita, rising to his feet. "He is working very hard, sir."

Kunihiko laughed aloud.

"Whether he works hard or not, what can we expect from such a touchy character?"

"But he has pledged himself to see to it that the three groups' merger conference fails by his own efforts, sir."

"Listen. There is a Korean saying, 'Handling a box of acupuncture needles without even knowing how to take a pulse.'"

The accompanying officials sitting around Kunihiko all laughed. Akita followed suit, blushed and sat down.

"We are going to root them out this time. What is the Korean Independence Army anyway? If we had grappled with it, we would have already sent them all to hell...."

Thus shouting Kunihiko jerked up from the sofa and paced up and down by the window. He was short and had a mean look, but his eyes had a glint as sharp as a razor. In fact, he was a prosecutor who had handled the case against the Japan Communist Party as his own speciality. He had been notorious for his ability to get to the bottom of any case he tackled. So the "Government-General in Korea" had invited this Kunihiko a year ago and let him handle the Korean Communist Party case. And now, he had been dispatched to this place to arrest An Muk and others in the Korean independence movement.

On his arrival at Mukden, as part of his scheme to arrest An Muk and his colleagues, Kunihiko had bribed the provost marshal of the Chang Tso-lin regime to expedite their scheme. The provost marshal had a consultation with Chang Tso-hsiang, the commander of the armed forces in the Kirin area, who was staying in Mukden at the time. On Kunihiko's advice he informed Chang Tso-hsiang that An Muk was a Communist and most of the independence movement workers who were gathered in Kirin were, in fact, Communists. So Chang Tso-hsiang readily accepted their suggestion, and sent out an order to his headquarters for the immediate arrest of An Muk and several others.

Kunihiko had taken along Chang Tso-hsiang (now in the next carriage) like a hunted animal. So, An Muk and other members of the Korean independence movement had been caught in the "Government-General in Korea's" noose.

An Muk had already begun his speech. Under the title of "Whither the Korean Nationalist Movement" he began with reviewing the history of Korea's independence movement.

"...Thirty years have elapsed since our independence movement was started by raising the banners of justice at Chechon, Chipyeong, Sonsan, Hongju and elsewhere. Our nation has crossed mountains of corpses and seas of blood, and demonstrated burning loyalty and accomplished shining exploits, thus leaving a bloody yet resplendent page in the history of the Korean independence movement. With sickles and hoes, clubs and sticks and sometimes our bare fists we had to fight an enemy armed with guns. Who has ever regretted their bones scattered over the

fields and their skulls pierced through by the spears?

"The battle thus started developing into the glorious struggle of the Righteous Volunteers and made a great upswing through the March the First Movement; then the main forces shed their loyal blood and dispersed to Shanghai, Manchuria, Russia and America. Thus the ranks grew thinner and thinner, one ordeal following another, and today the whole independence movement is in a sad state, indeed...."

The audience were enthralled and stared at An Muk breathlessly. As he moved they could see the Righteous Volunteer flags fluttering, the shouting demonstrators in the March the First Movement and hitting the Japs with hoes, sickles and sticks.

"Excellent. He is indeed the grand old man of the independence movement." O Bo Bae's uncle said in wonderment and admiration, nodding his horsehair hat. The tears trickled down from the eyes of Pastor Li Son Yop. Li Gap Mu, Sim Hak and So Gun Ha had an urge to wail and hit themselves on the floor, as the speaker came to the sad prospect of the present independence movement.

Of all the audience, only the students remained indifferent. They had not expected such elegant rhetoric from An Muk but something more substantial. So they did not stir, but watched him with bright intelligent eyes.

"What, then, is to be done? Should our movement remain as it is, instead of getting out of this sad state? Should we bury our five thousand years of history in the mud and leave our mountains and rivers, natural resources and our posterity in the hands of those island barbarians? Never. Now we must look back over these 30 years of bloody struggle and draw lessons from it to take a sounder attitude. What, then, are these lessons?"

An Muk drank from the glass of water poured by Li Son Yop. Then he pulled out his snow-white handkerchief, wiped his mouth and patted his forehead.

The lecturer continued. He spoke of 30 years of struggle as a struggle without tactics, plans or arms, using only sticks and bare hands; as a struggle that had begun under the impetus of the mood of the moment without ample preparations and ended in fiasco. He paced up and down before the table and vigorously shook the gold watch chain hanging from his waist coat pocket.

"He is right. Quite right. The 30 years of battle was waged without preparation. We rose in haste when the Japs invaded,

just like a tiger who is shot at...."

This was the opinion of most of the nationalists in the front rows. They nodded or collected themselves. Paek Rak Jin alone did not even look at An Muk. His lips were pursed and he looked over to the exit around which people were packed in like canned sardines.

The students had not yet shown any reaction. They had crowded in at the back and were staring at An Muk. His fiery speech had failed to warm them.

"So what shall we do now? Gone are the days when bloody battles were fought on the mood of the moment. Such a bloody struggle will not win us independence; it will only bring us misfortunes, mountains of corpses and seas of blood. The task before us now is to achieve national unity; steadily to foster our ability and to restore our dignity as a nation. Frankly speaking, ours is the least cultivated nation in the world, and the poorest. Whether we like it or not, we must admit this. How did America become such a great power?"

An Muk made lengthy remarks on the American history of progress. It was thanks to her national stamina, he said, that America, bathed in blood in the war of independence and the civil war, had accumulated the today's wealth on her vast territory. He told of his journey over the Rocky Mountains and across the great expanses of the West where he had seen the waving cotton fields. He also mentioned the industries of New York, Chicago and Detroit. He said if the American Indians had dominated US territory, we could not have seen such a developed industry and agriculture. On this basis he argued that Korea was destined to depend on a great power.

"Just think of it. Do you think we could beat the Japs, with sticks—or match-locks at best? It is impossible to raise our country to her feet, our country whose destiny is now at stake. We have to resort to every means to introduce foreign capital, obtain aid and foster our real ability like the Americans did. And the whole nation must exert all its efforts to build schools and factories, enlighten the farming villages and revitalize industries. We must increase that ability with which we must overrun the Japs."

This drew a great deal of applause. Pastor Li Son Yop clapped his hands, his face red with excitement. And many of the students cheered him too.

Comrade Kum Song looked around with a grave expres-

sion. He noticed students enthralled by An Muk's eloquence, and decided that this had to be stopped. An Muk was paralysing the audience with the harmful effects of national reformism and dependence on foreign forces.

This he could not tolerate. He was afraid the revolutionary movement could be damaged beyond repair. Determined to set the situation right, Comrade Kum Song quickly pulled out his pocket notebook and fountain pen. He tore out a few pages and jotted down quickly:

"Might I ask you a few questions?

"Q. ONE. You claim the necessity to develop industry and education so as to foster the Korean nation's real ability. Is this a practical possibility when we have lost our whole country to the Japanese imperialists? I should like to know how?

"Q. TWO. You consider our nation poorly cultivated. What are the grounds for this claim?

"Q. THREE. America, built on a sea of blood shed by the American Indians is a sworn enemy of the Korean nation. The Americans have committed aggression against us repeatedly, including the pirate attack by the *General Sherman*. Should we follow their example?

"Q. FOUR. Dependence on foreign forces would ruin the country. And isn't the introduction of foreign capital and 'aid' like leaving a piece of meat out for the wolf?

"Q. FIVE. To my mind your speech is tinted throughout with national reformism and non-resistance. What would you say about that?

"Kum Song of Yuwen Middle School"

Comrade Kum Song lost no time in folding his question sheet and handing it over to the student in front of him.

"Pass that up to the speaker. Quick. Don't let it be unfolded."

The note was passed forward. For the while An Muk was making an eloquent statement on the "self-cultivation of personality". An Muk had reached the paroxysm of excitement. According to his view, speech was art. So he liked to perspire on the rostrum for this pleasantly creative sensation.

The folded note was passed to the front row and reached the hands of Pastor Li Son Yop.

"What's this?" He asked aloud in a wide-eyed surprise, the folded paper in hand.

"Seems to be some questions. Hand it to Mr. An Muk."

"Who dares to ask questions while the lecture is going on?" Pastor Li was angry and whirled round to look back.

"Pass it to me." An Muk stopped speaking and stretched his hand.

"Questions should be kept to the end. Why ask questions during the lecture?" Pastor Li grumbled, handing the folded paper to An Muk.

An Muk unfolded and read the slips of paper. He changed colour. He was petrified and reread them. The fiery eloquence that seemed to have gripped the whole world was gone and a pale-faced figure remained standing at the rostrum. An Muk's face became darker and darker.

Pastor Li could guess the questions were unusual. In an endeavour to save the embarrassed lecturer, he thought out a trick.

"Hem! Since you have come all the way here to our chapel to hear Mr. An Muk's lecture, let us now offer a brief prayer to the Lord. Prostrate yourselves all." Pastor Li proposed in a loud voice, glancing over the audience. They did as asked by the pastor, all except the students who looked down and chuckled. Paek Rak Jin grinned at the students. Pastor Li said his prayer.

"Lord, God Almighty! Under Thy benevolence we national representatives are here at this august gathering today and listening attentively at a lecture that will lay the groundwork for the independence movement...."

As Pastor Li started offering prayers, An Muk stood like a robot at the rostrum. Now it was the pastor who was playing the main part and the lecture had receded into the background. In the long run, Pastor Li's trick did not save An Muk from his plight, but embarrassed him still more. Amid the flood of the pastor's eloquent prayer, An Muk was dripping with sweat. All his passion and vigour were lost. Even if he resumed his lecture, he thought, he could not recover his verve, for it had been broken. The questions pierced him to his heart. He seemed to see vividly the intelligent look of the questioner, and thought if he answered thoughtlessly, he would be put to great shame. He put his trembling hand into his pocket for a handkerchief.

Pastor Li's prayer lasted quite a while and ended in a loud "Amen!"

Yu Sang Jo, who saw the perspiration on An Muk's face, got up and went quickly to a corner, brought a tray and held it for An Muk. An Muk picked up a wet towel from the tray and slowly wiped his face. Then he collected his dishevelled moustache with his finger-tips.

He picked up and put down the slips of paper several times in an attempt to answer the questions. But he could not and, in a high-pitched voice, he dwelt on the problems of spiritual cultivation. In spite of his well-pitched voice, however, his speech had lost its force; it was no longer warm or beautiful. He seemed to be trying hard to restore this warmth and beauty, but the harder he tried the paler his face became. The audience realised that it was the slips of paper that had worked havoc with the speaker, who seemed completely tied in knots.

"Ahem! I intended to speak a bit longer today, but I see the audience is getting restive. Therefore, I think I had better stop now, and carry on another day. This is all." With these crestfallen words the lecturer left the platform.

There was a commotion among the nationalists who had been sitting in the front rows; they looked about them. They could not understand what had happened and shouted back when anybody said anything.

"Please stop. It's not the students' fault. I just felt unwell," An Muk explained.

The audience began to stir and the students were the first to rise. They surged towards the exit, encircled Comrade Kum Song and asked him what he had asked. But he went out with the others and said nothing.

Chang Dok Sun came over to Comrade Kum Song and whispered, "They are dying to know what questions you asked An Muk. I hope you'll come to Youth House and explain where An Muk was wrong."

"Let's go somewhere less under the enemy's eye. I think Chiangnan Park would do."

Now Chang Dok Sun called on the students to go to the park. Hearing Chang shouting, the elated Pak Gwang Sik too shouted to the dispersing students not to go home.

A little later the students were on the bank of the Sungari River. Hundreds of students went onto the blue ice. They crossed the river, sliding, running, holding onto each other. They were always optimistic. They were laughing, shouting, boxing, making a great to-do. A student sliding on the ice fell down and burst into merry laughter. A dozen or so students were marching, singing songs. Pak Gwang Sik was the most elated of all. He was sure that Comrade Kum Song was going to make a speech that would kindle flames in the students' hearts. Then, he thought, revolution would start boiling up among the masses. Once in a while he stopped on the ice and looked back at the crowds of students following him. A smile came to his face. He wanted to sing a revolutionary song.

In Chiangnan Park on the far side of the river the trees bare of leaves stood sparsely. Through the trees you could see pavilions, a tea house and flower shop which stood deserted all winter. The snow had been unusually heavy this winter but the river wind was so strong that it was almost blown off and you could see the darkish surface of the earth covered with dry grass. But today there was no wind and the weather was mild.

Having crossed the ice-bound Sungari, the agitated crowd of students flocked to one of the pavilions and surrounded the building. Some of them bounced up into the pavilion.

But, that day among the students there was a young man who did not belong to them. He did wear a student's overcoat, but he had a long combed-back hair and worn-out shoes and looked older than others.

He had followed the students and stood vacantly under a tree yonder. This young man was Kang Chang Su, who had come to visit Kwon Sim. He used to live next door to Kwon Sim in Seoul. He had left middle school and been to Japan before he finally decided to join in the socialist movement. He had hoped to work his way through school. But when he got to Tokyo, there had been the disastrous Great Earthquake. He had not only witnessed the catastrophe, but also the Japanese atrocities when they slaughtered many Koreans, which made

him grit his teeth in rage. He cried for nights in a back-alley of Tsurumi. Then he made up his mind that come what may, he must live a life worthy of a Korean and get into education. He collected rags, delivered newspapers, did all sorts of lowly jobs and finally he finished middle school and enrolled in the evening course at a university. But as the days went by, national indignation burned more fiercely within his heart. So one snowy day he hastened through the wet streets, delivering his 200 newspapers as quickly as possible, and then started to pack. He even ripped off his student cap. Back in Korea he sought for revolutionaries, and devoured Marxist-Leninist literature. He wandered about to find true revolutionary comrades. But the revolutionary movement in Seoul discouraged him. He was completely at a loss. Then, by chance he got Kwon Sim's address from his father, and had hurried to Kirin.

Kang Chang Su stood under the tree deep in thought. He was thinking that the atmosphere was undoubtedly different in Kirin. It seemed that the youth and student movement and the independence movement were larger in scale. And not just that. It seemed the torch was being taken over by a younger generation here. He had just seen the perspiring face of An Muk, quite incapable of answering those questions, and the Law School student who had sent the questions up—Kang Chang Su thought that was what Comrade Kum Song was. Anyhow, there was something happening here in this town. Something was passing but great new things were on the way. He decided that he might be hearing the rustle of history here.

A solidly built student ran to the pavilion and yelled to the crowd to be quiet.

"What's happening?" Kang Chang Su asked a student near him.

"They say Comrade Kum Song from Yuwen Middle School, the student who sent up those questions, is going to speak."

"You mean he is a middle school student?"

"Yes, he is. Shh, he's begun."

Kang Chang Su was stunned at the information that Comrade Kum Song was not a Law School student, and stared at the man who had stood in front of the other, and who was already speaking. He could not believe that Comrade Kum Song was only at middle school. The speaker was tall, refined, with a deep voice. This increased his conviction that he must be at the Law School.

Comrade Kum Song analysed An Muk's lecture. "You want to know what my questions were. Let me tell you then." He spoke for quite a while, and the students listened quietly.

"We don't want to hear a speech that has not substance, however beautiful the rhetoric—and An Muk's speech was undoubtedly beautiful! However, An Muk spoke about economic development, about fostering our abilities and spiritual cultivation, and claimed that these would bring something to the independence movement. Let us get to the bottom of what he means by this. How are things in Korea now? Having invaded our country the Japanese imperialist marauders have bound her hand and foot and are depriving us of anything that they want. For a start, they are stealing our mineral resources. They have sunk mines and are digging up our gold, silver, iron ore, coal and everything. At present the Japanese imperialists are investing a huge sum of money to take out more of Korea's minerals. And is that all that they are taking away? They have built factories and taken away Koreans' factories; they have taken over our railways, sea transport and other transport, to carry off our raw materials—for Japan manufactures machinery, clothes, all sorts of industrial goods and even foodstuffs to sell abroad; they bring some of them back into Korea to sell. They also produce things in Korea, in Korean factories where they force Korean workers to make these things by whipping their backs. They take away all the Korean rice, Korean cocoons, Korean tobacco. We Koreans eat barnyard millet gruel, while the Japs fatten up on the Korean rice they steal from us. They also carry off all our cattle. Well, that is the true state of affairs. And how can we Koreans develop our economy, our industry? Do you think the Japs will sit back with arms folded, advising us Koreans to develop our economy? Do you think the Japs will say: this is your own country, so extract your minerals if you wish, build factories and make goods?" Comrade Kum Song asked the audience. Then he straightened up and clenched his fist.

"We know what the Japs are. No sophistry, no flood of eloquence can cover that. So we can only come to the conclusion that the most urgent task is to fight Japanese imperialism first. We must fight, only fight."

Comrade Kum Song raised his clenched fist and shook it. The students crowded around the pavilion were all straining to get a good view of Comrade Kum Song. Those students who had applauded An Muk remained squatted blankly as if hit on

the back of their heads. While they were listening An Muk's speech he had seemed sensible and right, but after hearing Comrade Kum Song they could see all An Muk's mistakes. They had not known the simple and clear truth.

"Then An Muk dealt with the self-cultivation of the Korean nation. Well, do you think we Korean people are spiritually underdeveloped? Let me analyse An Muk's preamble first. He said the Korean independence movement has a sad prospect because over 30 years our struggle has been waged according to the mood of the moment. It is true? How fight for 30 years only according to the mood of the moment? Well, you think ours is a people who do not love their country? Aside from such patriots as Ulji Mun Dok and Kang Gam Chan, how did our forefathers fight during the Imjin Patriotic War against the Japanese invaders? The whole Korean people rose up and hit the Jap invaders with bows and arrows, with spears, with rocks or even with kitchen knives, while Li Sun Sin sank hundreds of enemy ships. Isn't this patriotism? Did the Righteous Volunteers and the Independence Army fight only according to their momentary mood without any patriotic spirit? Was the nationwide March the First Movement based on the mood of the moment? Did our people fight according to the mood of the moment when one of their arms was cut off, they rose the other arm and shouted long live independence? Is it that they just darted forward and dedicated their lives unhesitatingly just because of the mood of the moment, without any idea or spiritual force? Is our nation in such a primitive state?"

Comrade Kum Song interrupted a few moments before resuming.

"This is a monstrous insult to his nation and its sagacity. He is shameless enough to clamour, 'The Korean nation is spiritually uncultivated,' 'Spiritual cultivation and self-education are necessary.' In Seoul there are despicable fellows who advocate 'national reform'. There are people who claim that the Koreans are an 'inferior nation' and therefore their 'nationality' has to be improved. What's the difference between today's lecture and those shameless clamours? Well, are we Koreans an 'inferior nation'? Are we really 'inferior'?"

He was excited, and staring round the audience once again, continued.

"The Korean nation is by no means spiritually underdeveloped. They are a spiritually highly cultivated people. The Koreans

are the most patriotic of all peoples. They are clever, talented, intelligent, brave and have a strong sense of justice; they have a strong fighting will, are outstanding in creative power and full of energy. For our proud nation, the pride of being sons of Korea is still alive in our hearts. The nationalist movement has a sad prospect not because we have fought under the impetus of a momentary feeling, but because of a wrong leadership who see things in such a light. We must find the cause in the impotent upper crust who have no policy or measures and, who, each time they meet, are engrossed in empty talks and discussions, and do not know how to organise or mobilise the strength of the masses. These foul nihilistic views of their own nation are intolerable—they link their own defects with the sacred name of our nation. We must smash these attitudes and firmly defend the honour of our sagacious nation."

There was a roar of applause. The students who had watched the speaker with round eyes sent up such thunderous cheers that they shook the whole pavilion. Shouts of approval were heard from every corner. Choe Jin Guk, who had been standing at the bottom of the pavilion raised his hand.

"Have you anything to say, Comrade Choe?"

"Give me the floor, please," Choe Jin Guk asked in reply and his legs were shaking at the knees. He appeared to be deeply angry.

"Well then, how about hearing Comrade Choe Jin Guk's views?"

"Good."

The students answered in unison as Comrade Kum Song asked. Everybody was burning like fire. They rushed to Comrade Kum Song and bubbled with excitement. Choe Jin Guk ran up the pavilion and, his face reddening to the earlobes, yelled: "Well, then I...the...I will say a few words about that spiritual cultivation."

His eyes shot sparks.

"I witnessed my uncle on my mother's side cultivating himself spiritually. Listen to this ridiculous story."

There were peals of laughter and a hum of voices. Some shouted for order. With mingled sarcasm and anger Choe Jin Guk gabbled about how his uncle who had had faith in a certain religion had engaged in spiritual cultivation for a month.

"My uncle had been clever before, but then he went crazy about some religion. So he began his spiritual cultivation.

He only took a bowlful of powdered pine-needles and three unboiled beans a day and sat cross-legged on the floor, moving the upper part of his body back and forth. The family were awfully busy in the fields because it was time for the spring sowing...I happened to be at mother's home and asked uncle, 'What will you be after spiritual cultivation?' He said, 'Once I have reached spiritual enlightenment I can do anything I want; I can go up into the sky or into the earth.' So I asked him if he would be able to win independence for Korea. Uncle replied: 'I can not only do that, but can also colonize Japan in revenge for its occupation of Korea.' I was very young then and I expected to see a miracle. For a full month uncle meditated in his spiritual cultivation, until he looked like a skeleton with sunken eyes and sharp cheekbones. This really frightened grandma. She flung the door open and shrieked, 'Aren't you crazy, son?!' But uncle remained seated slowly swaying his shoulders back and forth, and said, 'Be quiet, mother, now I'm coming to fly. Flying now. While I soar up into heaven I shall throw off my clothes beside the Milky Way.' Grandma slapped her knee and said between wailing, 'My God, he has got really mad. His eyes look so queer.' So the whole family flocked around him and raised him up. But however hard they tried, he could not stand up because he could not stretch his knees. So grandma held his chest and other members of the family pulled his ankles. Then the knees stretched out with a snap."

The crowd had a side-splitting laughter. Choe Jin Guk shouted at them not to laugh, but to listen to him. His face was crimson with fury as he continued.

"Uncle's knees stretched out all right, but the muscles were damaged. So he had difficulties about three years. That was the sole result of his spiritual cultivation. I also witnessed an intellectual engaged in 'spiritual cultivation'. But I cannot tell all about it here today. What on earth is An Muk's spiritual cultivation? What is self-cultivation? And what is moral cultivation? What are they all? The words 'spiritual cultivation' reminded me of my uncle, so I told you about him. But what the hell is it? Where is it going to drive the Korean nation? Now, tell me that you, comrades who just applauded An Muk."

Choe Jin Guk looked around the pavilion.

"Let us take An Muk's lecture of today in its most favourable sense; let us construe his spiritual cultivation as developing education, conducting enlightenment work and forming person-

ality. Should this be an immediate slogan for us now? As Comrade Kum Song has just said, why does An Muk clamour for education and enlightenment, instead of calling us to fight the Japs who have invaded our country? We must see through why he does so. That is what I mean."

"Right," Comrade Kum Song said. "We must see through that. We must see through his national reformism."

As Choe Jin Guk came down from the pavilion, swinging his arms, his face flushed crimson, the students applauded him, many of them smiled because they had enjoyed his sarcasm.

Comrade Kum Song, in a lengthy explanation, emphasized that national reformism and capitulation were what hid behind this "spiritual cultivation" idea.

At this moment a Yuwen Middle School student ran, gasping, up to the pavilion. He went straight to Comrade Kum Song who was standing by the balustrade and whispered: "Mr. An Muk has been arrested. Arrested with a number of people as soon as they were out of the chapel."

"You have just come from across the river?"

"Yes. Right after I saw them arrest him near the chapel. They were raided by the military police at the Army Headquarters. But, strangely enough they only arrested Mr. An Muk and those who came from other areas. Maybe the military police did not touch the residents here because they know them. I don't understand the reason."

Comrade Kum Song was silent. He changed colour and walked up and down along the balustrade for several moments. Then he restored his boisterousness and went on.

"Well, let's continue. What did An Muk say in addition to what I have mentioned? He extolled the Americans, our sworn enemy, and claimed that Korea must follow the American example, that we must introduce American capital and receive her aid to foster our real ability. Why must we follow the example of America stained with blood and beg her for our independence? Why should we rely on America, instead of on our own efforts? Why is it that the so-called politician has not an iota of the spirit of independence and only desires for independence achieved with the help of foreigners? Let's see what kind of a country America is. An Muk said that America became a 'great power' because her people have 'high spiritual attainments and all of them are diligent and have stamina.' Well, is America really such a country? Has America become rich because of

that? Once upon a time a scholar brought his grandson into the courtyard and, pointing to a high mountain before his house, asked him what it was. The grandson answered it was a mountain. Then the scholar asked his grandson how the mountain had come into being. The grandson replied that it had sprung up from the ground. So the scholar laughed aloud and said, 'Your reply will do. You can't understand the history of creation.' I would like to tell this tale to An Muk. And I would like to answer: 'We know the history of creation!' Well, comrades, who among us does not know America was built in a sea of blood by exterminating the native American Indians, and who among us does not know the blood-stained history of American aggression characterized by invasion, slaughter, plunder? Do we as a people answer that the mountain sprang up from the ground? Achieve independence by depending on Americans? Impossible...this is ridiculous sleep talk. It is the same as asking a robber to mind your house. For nearly a hundred years Korean people have been aware that the Americans are gangsters and aggressors. Do you think these descendants of the pirates of the USS *General Sherman*, these highway robbers will bring us liberty and equality? We must not just look at the smile on their smooth faces; we must look beneath it for the dagger hidden in their bosom. We must never have any illusion about the Americans."

Comrade Kum Song stopped for a moment and waving his clenched hand appealed: "Let us oppose America-worshipping. Let us oppose dependence on foreign forces. Let us drive the Japanese imperialists out of our country by our own efforts and win our own independence!"

"Hear, hear!"

Shouts of acclamation burst out. The students clenched their fists or clapped their hands.

"American imperialism is a robber!"

"A gangster!"

The nationalist-minded students were gravely meditative. They had pinned great hopes on An Muk's speech. And, captivated by his speech at the chapel, they had indeed cheered him. Having heard Comrade Kum Song's speech, however, they realised that An Muk's was more worthless than a ragged shirt. The speech they had heard here at this place was like a sharp-edged axe, which chops up everything and pulls out the truth. That it did, though it was not embellished or high-sounding like

An Muk's.

"What are you thinking?" asked Song Chun Bo, officer of the students' society, touching a student standing nearby.

"A lot of things. How come such an extraordinary student is here?"

"I am, indeed, being surprised. He has appeared like a meteor. Each word he utters is a piece of gold. The hell with those fellows. Why didn't they carry on the movement the way they should? Who the devil are they? They are charged with reformism and non-resistance, and they cannot say a word to refute...."

Song Chun Bo had had the greatest hatred for socialism. He had such a violent character that while in Seoul he had tried to attack his socialist cousin with a razor after a debate.

"I wish those nationalist dotards would come here and listen to that speech so that they could come to their senses," again grumbled the long-necked Song Chun Bo, wiggling his Adam's apple. Alongside the nationalist students, those under the influence of Choe Gon or Wol Pa had learned a lot today. Cho Chang Jin or "Wol Pa Junior" of Wenkuang Middle School listened to the speech without blinking. Now and again he whispered to a tall student by his side: "There is something new in it—simple and clear, and he is said to be a Communist but deals with the national question with such ardour. Isn't this something new?"

The tall student nodded agreement.

In fact, Wol Pa or Choe Gon used so many difficult words in his speeches that they could hardly understand. And their speeches called for the Korean revolution but had always carried something ambiguous and they had often used expressions revealing their servile and nihilist attitudes towards their own nation. So even their disciples were little inclined to listen to them. But this speech by Comrade Kum Song filled their hearts with national pride and confidence and reaffirmed their will to revolution.

Comrade Kum Song went on to dwell on the bloody American imperialist policies of aggression. "...American imperialism is a wild beast. The most terrible blood-sucker. This blood-sucker is watching the world with its huge blood-smeared mouth and teeth and paws. Look at the US imperialist ambition to dominate the world since the First World War. Look at Wilson's '14-point policy'. There is no point that does not concern Ameri-

can imperialist expansion and world supremacy. Look at the so-called 'Dodge Plan' on German reparations. This is another manifestation of American expansionist policy in Europe. What is the American policy? Wilson yesterday and Coolidge today—who are they? They have acted like butchers who pour the plundered blood into the bottomless stomach of capitalist monopolies to feed their inherent greed. That is the American policy. In America only the wealth of monopoly concerns exists, a wealth that has augmented through aggression and plunder; there is no such thing as people's wealth. And what about their national stamina and diligence? What special high spiritual aspirations and what wealth have the Americans? Whoever insists that these exist is telling a bloody lie, it is a fabrication, a deception."

The weather changed and the river wind blew into the pavilion. The snow whistled in now and then. The wind scattered the snow over the heads of the students crowded around the pavilion. But they did not move, their attention focussed on the speaker's face.

Again Comrade Kum Song paused and, after pacing back and forth along the balustrade over which the snow was flurrying, he resumed.

"Comrades, here is a piece of information. An Muk was arrested by the Army Headquarters' military police several minutes ago."

The students were thunderstruck and strained. Whispers were heard here and there.

"Be quiet, comrades, please," yelled Chang Dok Sun from among the students. As the noises subsided, Comrade Kum Song went on to say.

"Obviously the Army Headquarters did this at the instigation of the Japanese imperialists. Look, comrades, the Japanese imperialists are a malicious enemy. How should we view An Muk's arrest? 'The Japanese imperialists robbed us of our country,' 'Japanese imperialism is our enemy.' Should we view the case with the feelings we usually have? No, we should not. We must clearly realise, through today's incident, the cruelty of the Japanese imperialists who repress us Koreans for every word we utter, for every movement of our finger tip. Why did they arrest An Muk? I have so far criticised him in my speech. But in his speech did he say that he would fire a single bullet at the Japanese imperialists? Yet the Japanese imperialists handcuffed

even this man and put him in jail. Must we just tolerate this? It is true that An Muk's ideas are wrong. But should we leave arrested Koreans in the hands of the Japanese imperialists, simply because their ideas are wrong? We must, at all costs, get back them all out of enemy hands. Japanese violence against An Muk is not a violence against him alone; it is a violence against all Koreans. United as firmly as a rock, we must punish the enemy with our iron fists and take the arrested out of their grip. By doing this we must demonstrate our dignified nation's unbreakable might at home and abroad."

"Hear, hear!"

There was sporadic cheering. All the audience were moved beyond measure at Comrade Kum Song's magnanimity. Song Chun Bo raised shouts of joy, wielding his cap. The tears glittered in his eyes for he had been grieved by An Muk's misfortune.

As Comrade Kum Song finished his speech, there was a hurricane of cheers. Yuwen Middle School students ran forward and shook hands enthusiastically with Comrade Kum Song who was coming down from the pavilion. The Law School students, too, surged forth and surrounded him. The wind became fierce, driving the snow into a frenzy. The whole of Chiangnan Park was swallowed up by the snowstorm. The students boiled over with passion, waving their caps and fists. A student darted up a rising behind the tea shop. He raised his clenched hand in the hard-hitting snowstorm.

....

*The streets crumbled in the battles
And the ranks broke up into groups.
But the plough of Equality
Turned up the fields.*

The student was reciting Eugene Potier's poem in the snowstorm. The students were excited, picturing the heroic scenes of *Bloody Week*.

*It was a mass slaughter.
But where blood was spilt
Long buds will sprout.*

....

The students recited in chorus. Each of them felt as if he had become the revolutionary poet of the Paris Commune, and their faces were flushed. The snowstorm howled more ferociously and struck their glowing cheeks before it fled on its way. In the midst of the students, Kang Chang Su's heart beat violently in an ecstasy of excitement. Now I have come where I should have come, he thought. How lucky that Korea is surviving so stoutly! Why didn't I quit the university and come here before! I scurried about carrying newspapers in the streets in torrential rain, in chilling sleet...and what is the price for that? That cursed land, I grit my teeth at the thought of that country...Kang Chang Su trembled. He wanted to take another look at Comrade Kum Song's extraordinary features, so he searched him among the students.

CHAPTER IV

RIISING WAVES (1)

1

Spring came. The evening sun shone over the town and the budding branches of the trees that lined the street danced in the soft breeze. Gyong Ju climbed up the sloping road behind the rice-cleaning mill, pulling up a handcart loaded with bags of rice-husks. This hill always gave her a headache when she came back with the husks, so usually her brother came with her to push the cart from behind. But today he could not come because he had to repair the kitchen before he left Kirin. So she had bought less rice-husks than usual, but it was still hard pulling them up the slope alone.

Step by step Gyong Ju went up the hill in the golden sun. Sweat streamed her cheeks. But she felt mental pain rather than physical hardship; indescribable sorrow penetrated her heart like an evening shadow. She had tried to get used to the idea of her brother's going, but her heart was still heavy at the thought that he was leaving now. How can I live alone in Kirin, she wondered. My brother and I have both pledged to find a way to work for revolution come what may. My brother says he will go to Chientao and get a job there and join his comrades there to start the struggle. He says that later he will try to send for me so that I can carry on studying. But how can I be sure? He says he cannot go on fighting here; that there he will meet many like-minded people so that he can set to. Will he really get a job that easily? I am worried both for my brother who is going and for myself who will be left behind. My brother has worked so hard for the revolution, but his work has born no fruit, so he has to leave Kirin. Why? Is revolution only a beautiful dream which has no substance? What is the reason for our present plight?

Tears fell from Gyong Ju's eyes and trickled down her cheeks mixing with the beads of sweat.

Her handcart became heavier and heavier. It was still a long way to the top of the hill. She put her back into it, digging in her toes though these were wet with sweat inside her rubber shoes. Then, suddenly the heavy load was moving easily as if it were being pushed.

Gyong Ju looked round and saw a student pushing the cart from behind.

"Oh, who are you?"

"Go ahead and pull while I push." The student's eyes were bright as he looked up and smiled. Gyong Ju felt a lump in her throat. Oh, it's him, she thought. That same wonderful student whom I saw outside the general shop near Tunghsing Bookshop, the same student who helped the rickshawman and made that gentleman pay him a proper fee. The student who seemed almost like a giant from some ideal world. What brought him here to this hill to push my handcart? Gyong Ju's heart was beating faster.

"Honestly, you needn't. I really can manage this myself." Gyong Ju said, looking round, she felt it was an imposition.

"That's all right, I'm going up the hill anyway, so I might as well help."

Gyong Ju had to turn back and pull the cart. The student pushed so strongly that it rolled up effortlessly and Gyong Ju felt guilty. Paek Sun Hui had told her that this student had made a wonderful speech at Chiangnan Park, had carried several hundred students with him. And she had said that he really knew Marxism. And Gyong Ju's brother had often talked about this student. He'd said since this student had come to Kirin, students at all schools had been astir; and the day this student made his speech in the park, her brother had tossed all night, had been too in deep thought to sleep.

She wondered where this unusual student had come from. She pulled the cart as hard as she could to ease his burden.

Soon they reached the top. Gyong Ju dropped the poles and thanked Comrade Kum Song.

"Don't mention it. But why are you pulling such a heavy load alone?"

"I can manage," Gyong Ju replied, smiling bashfully. She took off her kerchief and wiped her brow.

"By the way, I'm looking for a man called Chae Gyong; a

student of the Law School who lives somewhere around here. Do you know where he lives?" Comrade Kum Song asked, looking at the low houses that clustered on the base of the hill. Gyong Ju could not answer immediately, her face reddening.

"I was told to go to the top of the hill and turn to the left...."

"That's my house."

"Why, then, you must be Comrade Gyong Ju? Are you Comrade Chae Gyong's sister, then?"

"Ye—s, but how do you know me?..."

"I have heard about you. You are doing odd jobs to keep yourself at school. It must be very hard going!"

"We manage." Gyong Ju's face turned redder still and she could not stop twisting her kerchief in her hands. The backs of her hands were very rough and chapped and one of the fingers was bandaged with a piece of cloth to prevent the knuckle of the finger from getting sore.

"Is your brother home?"

"Yes, he is."

"Let's go, then. Here, let me pull this."

He was going to take hold of the cart poles, but Gyong Ju got hold of them first without bothering to put the kerchief on and started to pull vigorously as if afraid that he might continue to push the load from behind.

They went some way through the winding back-alley till they got to a thatched cottage beside a red brick wall. It was as tiny as a swallow's nest. But it had a fence around it, neatly patched together out of bits of board.

Gyong Ju pulled the cart in through a gate also made of odd boards. A bell rang when the cart grazed the gate-post. Comrade Kum Song looked up to see a yellow bell hanging on the gate-post. It had a mouth like a catfish, and it rang whenever the gate doors were touched.

That's clever work! Comrade Kum Song thought and entered the yard behind the handcart.

"Brother! Where are you, brother!"

Gyong Ju looked around the yard for her brother. But there was no answer. Two iron pots stood upside down in the yard and the kitchen door was open.

"He must be gone somewhere. Please wait a bit."

"But why did he take out the cooking pots?"

"To repair the fireplace. It's too smoky." Gyong Ju re-

plied, quickly untying the rope from the handcart.

The yard was as tiny as the palm of your hand. And yet there was a flower garden thick with the buds of unknown flowers as yellow as red pepper seeds.

Comrade Kum Song helped Gyong Ju unload the cart.

"Please don't."

"Why? At your house I have an urge to work."

Having untied the rope, Gyong Ju picked up and carried bags of rice-husks into the open shed. So did Comrade Kum Song. Gyong Ju asked him to stop, because he would be covered in dust. But he pretended not to hear. The brother and sister kept the shed neat and tidy as elsewhere. There was a shelf on the wall with a large scooped wooden dish, earthenware, broom and other household utensils on it and a few bundles of firewood were piled up in a corner. There were also misshapen wooden boxes, pieces of ironware and wires heaped up. Apparently the fence was built with suchlike waste material. He felt a lump in his throat. This spirit of independence had helped brother and sister to subsist.

When the rice-husks were unloaded, Gyong Ju pushed the handcart out of the gate. She said she had to return the cart to its owner and ran out into the yellow sunshine beyond the fence, seemed to be bounding dexterously through a harsh world.

When Gyong Ju was gone, Comrade Kum Song stood in the yard for a minute before he went into the kitchen. He wanted to know why the fireplace got smoky. He spent several minutes examining the fireplace and the earthen floor; he pushed a poker into flues under the floor. Presently Chae Gyong came in through the gate, carrying two splashing buckets of water on a pole. He had been to the Sungari River to fetch water. Water was scarce in Kirin, so people had to fetch it from the river and filter it before drinking. They had to go down to the Sungari for every little drop.

"Oh, it's you?" exclaimed Chae Gyong, as he approached the kitchen door.

"Ha, ha. Excuse me coming in."

"What brings you here?"

"I came to see you. But even Comrade Gyong Ju has gone off somewhere, so I've found myself in a deserted house...."

"Ha ha ha. Quite a surprise."

Then Chae Gyong took the buckets off the carrying pole and put them down on the earthen porch. His trouser legs were

wet, one of them was soaking.

"Do you still go to school?" Chae Gyong asked.

"Yes, I do."

"Do you still have anything to learn there?"

"What do you mean, do you think there's nothing to learn at school?"

Chae Gyong laughed out loud. So did Comrade Kum Song. They had been introduced to each other at Kwon Sim's, but that was all. But Comrade Kum Song was kind enough to come here and talk to Chae Gyong and Chae Gyong was delighted. He had heard a lot about Comrade Kum Song. The Law School students who had heard his speech at Chiangnan Park said a meteor had appeared over Kirin. So Chae Gyong had secretly respected and worshipped him.

"What brings you here?"

"The sun is setting, let's fix the fireplace first."

"That's my job."

"Let me help you a bit."

"Ha ha ha. That's no way for me to treat a guest."

"What a way to treat a guest—taking all the pots off the stove!"

Chae Gyong burst out laughing, and in high spirits he took up a hoe and went into the kitchen. Comrade Kum Song followed him. The kitchen was so narrow that there was little room for both of them.

Then Gyong Ju appeared at the kitchen door.

"Isn't it strange? There are neither ashes nor soot, but whenever the fire is built, my Gyong Ju weeps...."

"Oh, brother...."

"Don't you weep?"

"I don't weep; it's just that my eyes get sore."

"That means you weep."

Comrade Kum Song laughed.

Chae Gyong looked glum, but he was good-natured. And once in a while he would play tricks to make people laugh, so his colleagues at the Law School had nicknamed him Nolbu (who, in the old story, was punished by Heaven for maltreating his younger brother Hungbu—Tr.). This nickname (which in fact showed a feeling of amity for Chae Gyong) was the result of a very funny episode. Chae Gyong used to deliver milk to the house of a student at the Girls' Normal School. She got her milk bottle every morning, and she noticed that the milkman looked

very like a student at the Law School whom she often met near the stadium. One evening on her way home from school she met the student and asked him. "Have you a twin?"

"What do you mean?" Chae Gyong returned, stopping in the road and looking in the girl's face.

"Haven't you got a twin brother?"

"Not me, no."

"How odd! He looks exactly like you...."

"Who?"

"The young milkman who comes to my house every morning. He looks exactly like you."

"Does he? Ha ha. He is my younger brother."

"Oh, that's it. I wondered why he was so like you. But why do you make your younger brother deliver milk, while you go to school?"

"He is my stepmother's son."

"Good Heavens, you treat him so badly because he is your stepmother's son?"

"But one should treat a half-brother differently, shouldn't one?"

"Oh, how terrible! You are Nolbu."

The girl student ran away. After that, whenever Chae Gyong took the bottle of milk, the girl student expressed her indignation and told him he should disown his brother, that his elder brother was Nolbu. Hence the nickname.

Chae Gyong worked in the kitchen for quite a long while, poking the flues under the floor and sweeping the bottom of the fireplace, but he could not find out what was wrong and finally gave up trying. Comrade Kum Song suggested that they look at the chimney.

"Let's. But the way we have looked after that chimney, it must be the best tin chimney in Kirin." Chae Gyong joked, following Comrade Kum Song into the backyard. The chimney was, as Chae Gyong had boasted, made of galvanized iron. And all the places where it had rusted through were patched with paper.

"Look at this. We've patched it up everywhere so that not a wisp of wind can get in. I don't think there is anything wrong with the chimney."

Comrade Kum Song did not say anything and watched the chimney. Then he put his arms round it and lifted it off.

"What are you going to do?"

"Let's take a look at the bottom."

He turned, holding the chimney in his arms. Chae Gyong quickly got hold of its swaying top and Comrade Kum Song started digging where the chimney had been standing.

"Ah there's something wrong here. You never dug out the bottom of the chimney, so the fireplace is bound to smoke, you see? You'll have to dig here."

Chae Gyong was silent, only tilting his head in wonder. He could see that Comrade Kum Song was talking sense.

"In other words, you have to make a trap to catch the wind. You have to trap the cold wind coming into the chimney and sap its strength here so that it cannot blow straight into the flues. Moreover, the wind entrapped here is warmed up and blows up the chimney, drawing in the flames."

"Sounds reasonable. Rather scientific."

"The same theory applies to our revolution. If you draw even the forces wavering in the middle of the road into our fold, the forces of the revolution grow the stronger. It is the same as warming the cold wind and drawing in the flames."

"Ha ha ha. That's a good metaphor. Pass me the shovel."

"No, let me finish it, while you work the clay."

Comrade Kum Song pushed the blade firmly into the soil with his foot in a white canvas shoe and scooped out a shovelful of dirt.

Chae Gyong went out to the yard and kneaded the clay with his sister. Gyong Ju had chopped rice straws with an axe and mixed them with a heap of earth.

"The students praise him as a Marxist, you know?"

"Yes, he is a wonderful man."

"Very simple, eh?"

"Simple, yes, but he seems to have a lot of knowledge."

The brother and sister talked in undertones as they worked the clay. Chae Gyong thought that the brief remarks Comrade Kum Song had made just now contained a new meaning. If you draw the wavering forces into our fold, the forces of the revolution grow stronger, he had said. Anyhow, this was something new which he had never heard from Choe Gon or his colleagues.

Chae Gyong was in a very cheerful mood as he sat there with his trousers tucked up, working the clay. He felt as if the hollow shadow was gone out of the house. When they came home from school the brother and sister would try to hide up their sense of bleakness from each other, but this evening they seemed to have no such trouble. The brother and sister kept

carrying clay to the chimney. Both hoped that the kitchen could be kept clear of smoke.

Presently the chimney was put back and, standing on tiptoe, Comrade Kum Song tied the upper part of it to the lattice sticks under the eave.

"The house is just about as tall as I am."

"Well, it is new born, so now it will grow taller," returned Chae Gyong, grinning. Gyong Ju, squatting at the bottom of the chimney, coating it with the clay, bit her lip to stop laughing.

By the time the pots were replaced, it was getting dark.

Seated in front of the fireplace, Gyong Ju built up the fire with a swaying heart. It did not burn well at first because the fireplace was still wet. But, once it did get going, the flames ran into the flues with a great roar. Her brother shouted from outside that the smoke was coming out of the chimney. Gyong Ju dashed out of the kitchen. And indeed, dark clouds of smoke were rising out of the chimney. Gyong Ju ran back into the kitchen.

"My goodness, he even knows this sort of thing! He has repaired it so easily and...." Gyong Ju mumbled, her eyes dim with tears. She stirred the fire with the poker. But the fire did not die. Before, when she did this to try and raise the flames, it would just die out. But, now when you stirred it the flames rose and the fire burned brighter. Comrade Kum Song came into the kitchen followed by Chae Gyong. They all looked at the dancing flames. In the glow of the fire Chae Gyong grinned, yelling, "A miracle, this really is a miracle!" He felt as if this was not the fire in the fireplace but a sign that had appeared in their bare lives. Chae Gyong was even more elated, as he accompanied Comrade Kum Song into the next room.

Gyong Ju hurried off to prepare the supper. She was going to serve Comrade Kum Song, too. I can't just let him go! she thought to herself. We have only sorghum and no side-dish, but I must prepare some supper so that he can eat with my brother, mustn't I? Gyong Ju worked vigorously, taking care of the fire and washing the rice. She took a couple of dried pollacks preserved on the shelf of the shed and beat them on the pounding stone. She was going to make a side-dish.

Meanwhile, Comrade Kum Song and Chae Gyong began to talk. They seemed to be talking about the revolution, and Gyong Ju stopped beating the dried fish to listen.

"...As for the Ryogil Students Society, the Korean students

in Kirin formed it in great hope. So we can't do away with it just like that. And you must think about the revolution, too, mustn't you? I have had little opportunity to have close contact with you, but I have regarded you as a dependable friend who will join me in revolutionary struggle. And my visit to your house this evening has confirmed this thought. In spite of the desolate situation you are strong enough to make your own living while you work very hard at school and are active in the movement. I was quite impressed by that."

Gyong Ju listened to his talk, moving the beating club up and down softly; she felt as if she heard lullaby from a distant place.

"We have a saying, 'A tower built with hard effort does not crumble.' You have worked so hard for the revolution, and now you want to back out. Is that right? Yes, Paek Sun Gi left Kirin, but your going would be different. Paek Sun Gi is a wanderer without ideas, you are not."

"Do you think I have ideas? I, too, have a grim future. I live with my poor sister and eat the food she cooks, but I can't give her even a penny towards her school fees. Whether this situation is what has driven us both along the revolutionary road, I don't know. But I didn't make my decision because of my hard life or my sister's plight; but because here the revolution itself is at a dead end. Then where should we go? There is no way out, and I have to change my mind."

The brother's voice was violent. When he had talked to her, he had not said such pessimistic things. Now she understood better how agonized and confused he had been.

"Today's reality is a bitter thing for any conscientious young Korean revolutionary to face. But we must not avoid it, we must fight bravely through. You needn't worry too much. You can't start a revolution in Kirin? Has the revolutionary movement really come to a dead end? You two are living here like this, managing in the teeth of all your troubles, and that makes me feel that you are advancing optimistically towards the revolution. Comrade Chae Gyong, give up the idea of going away and join with me for the revolution. If you went, how lonely would Comrade Gyong Ju feel? It is true that we must endure personal sacrifices for the sake of revolution, but do you think your idea is such that you are entitled to demand such a sacrifice from Comrade Gyong Ju?"

Gyong Ju could no longer hold back the tears. She moved

to the earthen floor in the kitchen, squatted in front of the fireplace and wept, covering her face with her hands. His warm words had moved too much. What brought such a man to our house now, she asked to herself. Did he come to take away our darkness?

Choked by a wild passion, Gyong Ju cried in her heart: "Brother, he is proposing that we get together to work for the revolution; why are you silent? I think if I could work for the revolution under his guidance, our future would be very bright. Yes, bright indeed!"

2

Chae Gyong could not sleep that night. He took out the letter from his friend at Chientao. It was overflowing with comradeship. It was obvious that Han Yun Su, his friend, had suffered the same agonies as Chae Gyong. He said repeatedly that on receiving Chae Gyong's letter, he felt sympathetic towards him and asked him to come as soon as he received this letter. He added that he could not say that there was a good job there right now, but when Chae Gyong came, he would work with him at the local office of a newspaper, and share his food. He hoped he might find a proper job as the time passed.

"...Come. The future looks grim to me, too. I opened this newspaper bureau, for it is important, important anyway for educating the masses.

"Yet, I am groping, without a clearcut goal. Do come soon for I believe that if I could talk to you, my suffering might be eased a bit. I feel intolerably gloomy and pessimistic...."

Chae Gyong read and read this passage and sank in thought, recalling Comrade Kum Song's words: "Today's reality is a bitter thing for any conscientious young Korean revolutionary to face. But we must not avoid it, we must fight bravely through."

That was quite true. He decided that he would have to think things over again before he finally made up his mind to go to Chientao. And he could not discount the fact that here in Kirin which had disillusioned him, apart from Choe Gon or Kwon Sim, a new strong force was emerging and that its waves would affect him too.

Chae Gyong wrote a short letter to Han Yun Su in Chientao. He said that when he first got his letter, he intended to leave right away but some unavoidable circumstances held him back, and asked him to understand this. The tone of his letter gave no real indication as to whether or not he would accept his friend's invitation. Chae Gyong did not sleep a wink that night and next morning he got up unusually early. But he felt very refreshed and he swept the yard, hoed the flower garden and did some repairs on the fence. Gyong Ju, too, was cheerful as she worked briskly, lighting the fire and washing the dishes, in a now smoke-free kitchen.

"This morning our house looks like a real house; your eyes are not streaming and...." Chae Gyong joked as he fetched a basin of water out of the kitchen for a wash.

"Don't you take salt?"

"Oh yes, pass me some."

The sister passed him a cup of salt.

Chae Gyong finished washing and was rubbing his face with the towel, when Paek Sun Hui, daughter of Paek Rak Jin, came into the yard to see Gyong Ju; she was already on her way to school. She was a pretty, slender girl dressed in a white jacket and a dark skirt.

"Going to school already?"

"Already? It's nearly eight."

"We always breakfast late because Gyong Ju gets up late." Paek Sun Hui laughed taking Chae Gyong's words a joke.

"Oh, you! She doesn't get up late."

"That's all you know. Gyong Ju sleeps like a log. The other day there was a thief in here just about to steal things."

Again Paek Sun Hui laughed aloud. Chae Gyong grinned, rubbing his neck.

"By the way, where did your brother go?"

"He went to Seoul."

"Why to Seoul? He said he was going to Shanghai."

"Because my father said that he would not give him money for school if he went to Shanghai. My brother can't oppose our tiger-like father."

Chae Gyong laughed to hear this.

"It's a good thing he went to Seoul, he will do better to study there than in Kirin."

"When are you going to Chientao?"

"I'll have to leave as soon as possible because I hate seeing

you. Once I go, I'm sure you will come here oftener to Gyong Ju."

"I'll even bring my desk here."

Gyong Ju, listening in the kitchen, sighed when she heard this. He had not said anything definite last night, but when she saw him bustling about this morning in such an unusually cheerful mood she thought he might have changed his mind. Yet it seemed that he had not given up the idea. He had been given such an earnest advice, so why did he not change his mind? There is no immediate job there, so why is he so anxious to go?

Gyong Ju had breakfast in a hurry and went off to school with Paek Sun Hui.

Chae Gyong also went to school that day. He had planned to pack up his things and send them on by rail, but he changed his mind.

At school the stuttering teacher gave a two-hour lecture on business law, the subject he liked least. But he even took notes, instead of simply looking at the stammerer's uncommonly big nose, as he usually did.

In the evening when he was ready to go home, Song Chun Bo, an officer of the students' society came to see him. He asked him to come to his house to attend a meeting of students' society officials.

"Meeting of officials? You can discuss things yourselves."

"Oh don't be so difficult. Come along," said Song Chun Bo, giving him a shove. Chae Gyong was a students' society official, too, but he shunned the nationalist-minded Song Chun Bo no less than Paek Sun Gi. In a sense he disliked Song Chun Bo more than Paek Sun Gi for he had a violent nature.

Reluctantly, Chae Gyong followed Song Chun Bo. On his way Chae Gyong wondered why a group of nationalist officials had sent for him to join them at a meeting several months after he had cut his links with them.

Song Chun Bo's small room was packed with students' society officials.

"Thanks for your coming. Come on in."

Quite unexpectedly, Comrade Kum Song, who had been seated in the middle of the room, jumped to his feet and shook hands. Only then did Chae Gyong realise why the students' society officials had sent for him.

Chae Gyong was astonished. He had never imagined that

Comrade Kum Song might be among students' society officials. "Since you didn't come we started without you. Comrade Song Chun Bo must have been looking for you all over the place, you are so late...."

"Yes, I looked in his house but he was not in, so I went to the school," replied Song Chun Bo. Sitting down beside Comrade Kum Song, Chae Gyong listened to the debate now going on in the room. They were discussing how to push ahead with the movement to set An Muk free. Everybody spoke with great zeal. Some claimed that since the special emissary of the "Government-General in Korea" was now entrenched in the Japanese consulate, it was impossible to set An Muk free unless the Japanese was eliminated. A student said that Li Pil Su and So Gun Ha had promised them some pistols, and proposed to lay in ambush near the consulate and shoot him.

"How would that help to get Mr. An Muk released?"

"Because he hatches plots behind the scenes. The Army Headquarters has been deceived by him and will not release those arrested. And you think we should let him live?"

"Don't be absurd. Of course the Jap is brewing plots but I don't think it is because of any plot of his that the Army Headquarters won't release them."

"But if we kill him, the Army Headquarters might come to their senses. We'll have to assassinate either him or the consul. That's the only thing that'll work."

They all argued hotly with flushed faces. A real campaign was under way for the release of An Muk and the other arrested. The students had sent letters of protest to the Army Headquarters, the Police Agency and even the prison. The nationalists, who had gathered here for the merger conference, had been unable to hold their meeting and had worked desperately for the release of the arrested petitioning the Army Headquarters and even sending bribes. But the authorities did not release An Muk and the others. Hence the students were discussing what to do next.

"You have all expressed your views; my opinion is this," said Comrade Kum Song, having heard them out.

"This case cannot be settled by assassinating the special emissary of the 'Government-General in Korea'. Maybe at first the Army Headquarters played into the hands of the Japanese. But having once arrested people, they will do everything in their power to keep them and to frame them for some crime, so as

to cover themselves. So we will have to bring pressure to bear on the Army Headquarters. To my mind, we must arouse large sections of the public and drive the Army Headquarters into a tight corner to set the prisoners free."

"What means are there for doing that?" asked Chang Tae Ho, vice-president of the students' society, his eyes wide.

"I think it is possible to rouse them. As I have just said, this case has to be made a public problem. We must raise the problem so that a wide section of the public become aware of the fact the Chang Tso-lin regime is acting illegally, deceived by the Japanese imperialists. First of all, let us send letters to every newspaper, denouncing Japanese imperialism and the Chang Tso-lin junta. Let us also send letters of denunciation to public organisations and student bodies in every big city. And we will enclose an appeal to launch a movement of sympathy with our struggle. I am sure that will get some reaction."

Everybody was silent and their expressions showed their approval.

"You are right," Song Chun Bo said. "I support your view." Ever since he was impressed by Comrade Kum Song's new standpoint on the national question, Song had been the first to support all his proposals.

"It's a good idea. We must kindle the flames," said another student. After considerable thought, the cautious Chang Tae Ho also agreed, saying: "I have no objection. Let's give it a try."

"What do you think, Comrade Chae Gyong?" asked Comrade Kum Song.

"I agree. It is an excellent idea." Chae Gyong answered, blushing. Everybody was excited, and all agreed that it was a good proposal.

By the time the meeting ended it was dark. Out in the street Comrade Kum Song advised Chae Gyong to take an active part in students' society work, and asked him to come to Pastor Li Son Yop's chapel tomorrow evening, to attend the inauguration meeting of the Juvenile Association. Chae Gyong said he would. The tears were ready to well up in his eyes at the thought that Comrade Kum Song was guiding him so energetically and firmly.

After parting from Comrade Kum Song, Chae Gyong did a lot of thinking.

How did he get such influence with the society officials? Surely no socialist would be accepted by that group. Nor would he try to. That's why I become an official in name only. What is

he going to do? Is he going to take the helm and guide the students' society in a different direction? And he said he was going to form the Juvenile Association. What did that mean? Anyhow, one thing was certain: a great new move has begun.

When he got home, his supper was ready and Gyong Ju was waiting for him.

"Now you are not going to shed your tears!" said Chae Gyong, sitting at the table across from her.

"When I'm in the kitchen now, I really feel like singing," his sister told him, thinking that her brother meant the kitchen was now free of smoke.

"I don't mean that. You won't cry because you are not going to lose your brother, my dear."

"Then, you're not going to Chientao?"

"No. I have changed my mind. Why should I leave this wonderful Kirin?"

"Indeed?"

"Why not?... Let us work for the revolution together, here!"

His sister didn't say a word.

"They say the Juvenile Association will be inaugurated at Pastor Li Son Yop's chapel tomorrow evening. Let's go there together."

Instead of replying, Gyong Ju turned away her face and wiped away some tears with the end of her jacket ribbon. She felt sorry for her brother whom she had not understood. Her brother never decided anything without profound thinking.

Gyong Ju had never been so grateful to her brother as now.

"Let's eat."

"Yes."

Again she wiped away her tears and ate her supper.

Next day when Gyong Ju went to school, her schoolmates were busily discussing the new Juvenile Association everywhere.

"Look, the Ryogil Students Society has been our only student body. How nice it will be to have a juvenile association."

"I have already put my name down. They say a lot of people from our school have applied for membership."

"And who is the organiser?"

"Some say the students are organising it and others say Paek Sun Hui's father is organising it...I don't care who is organising it, we'll all join."

The students discussed the topic full of hope.

Paek Sun Hui came running to Gyong Ju.

"You heard the news about the Juvenile Association, didn't you?"

"No, I didn't," returned Gyong Ju deliberately.

"I was told that Korean youth and children in Kirin will be united around this Juvenile Association. And they will fight for Korea's independence, no, for socialism...."

Paek Sun Hui was always bright like a morning star.

"Who said we shall fight for socialism?"

"I know all about it. But a funny thing is that although the association is being organised for socialism, my father is said to be zealously sponsoring it behind the scenes."

"Then your father will become socialist."

"My goodness! He'll never be socialist. He is taking socialist youth for nationalist youth."

"Nonsense."

"Ha ha ha. Come along with me this evening and listen to the speeches. You heard old Pastor Li Son Yop speak, didn't you? 'Ahem, we shall certainly repulse the invasion by the malicious Jap dogs and make them share the same fate as that burglar the Kaiser who sought world supremacy....' Ho ho ho."

Shaking her little hand, Paek Sun Hui mimicked Pastor Li Son Yop speaking at his chapel, and laughed boisterously, clinging to Gyong Ju's shoulder. Gyong Ju also laughed loudly.

3

That evening. Gyong Ju and her brother were about to leave for Pastor Li Son Yop's chapel when Choe Gon, a member of the executive committee of the "General Bureau of the Korean Communist Party in Manchuria", came to see Chae Gyong.

He had a long face and his bushy "socialist hair" looked like a woman's. He always wore a pair of thick-rimmed spectacles, but this evening he hadn't got them on, and his eyes looked sunken.

"Well, I was told that Paek Sun Gi had gone away somewhere to study. Is it true?" asked Choe Gon, sitting down on the floor.

"Well, they say so."

"Do you know where he has gone?"

"I'm not sure."

"And you don't know why he left Kirin?"

"He left here to study, of course. To study in a better place than Kirin...."

"Um...."

Choe Gon remained seated, absorbed in serious thoughts. He was a big-built man, and his hand, which held a cigarette holder, was also uncommonly large. Chae Gyong realised that Choe Gon had come to find out something. He had been trying hard to build up his group's influence in Kirin and been in deadly opposition to the nationalists; so he would naturally be interested in this kind of problem.

"And they say they are going to inaugurate an organisation of youngsters. What's that all about?"

"They have had no juvenile group, so they seem to be setting one up."

"Um.... Comrade Chae, do you know Mr. Kim Hyong Jik's son who has enrolled in Yuwen Middle School?"

"I don't know him."

Chae Gyong did not know that Comrade Kum Song was Kim Hyong Jik's son.

"You don't know him? Weren't you in Chiangnan Park when he spoke?"

"I wasn't."

"Um...."

Choe Gon again looked grim and lit another cigarette and sank deep in thought. It seemed to him that there had been quite a few new developments in Kirin, but he could not keep pace. It was said that Paek Rak Jin had sent his son abroad to study. He should not have done so in order not to lose influence with the student forces in Kirin. Moreover, he was said to be actively sponsoring Kim Hyong Jik's son to set up a juvenile organisation. However hard he had tried, he could not understand what Paek Rak Jin's intentions were. Why wasn't Paek Rak Jin arrested when An Muk was? Many people had been arrested but the foothold of nationalism in Kirin did not shake because Paek Rak Jin and his kind stood firm. That was why Choe Gon's forces were unable to penetrate into the youth and children.

Also Choe Gon asked Chae Gyong about the campaign to set An Muk free, which seemed to have run against a deadlock. What were they going to do, Choe Gon inquired. Chae Gyong replied he did not know.

After a while Choe Gon got to his feet, saying that he, too, had been invited to attend the inauguration meeting of the Juvenile Association. Chae Gyong too rose.

"Are you going to the inauguration meeting, too?"

"Yes, Gyong Ju says she will join in the Juvenile Association, so I'm going with her."

"Um, she should join in the Juvenile Association. She must study at school, but at the same time she must temper herself through the movement."

Choe Gon coughed gently and went out onto the earthen porch, put on his enamelled leather shoes and picked up his walking stick.

When the three arrived at the chapel, the chapel was already packed with students. There was a row of chairs in a corner, which were occupied by Pastor Li Son Yop in a gray *turumagi*, Li Pil Su, Chong Min Su and other personages. As Choe Gon greeted them, they all greeted him politely, remaining seated.

"Why, Mr. Choe, I was told that you had gone to Chientao, but you are still here, eh?" said Chong Min Su with a rather buoyant face.

"I haven't left yet," replied Choe Gon, sitting down next to Chong Min Su. He leaned his large body on the back of the chair and looked round at the students. Many students whispered to each other, looking at Choe Gon. Choe Gon smiled and nodded at them.

Presently Paek Rak Jin came into the chapel wearing a white *turumagi*. He stretched his muscular neck and, wiping the sweat from a handkerchief again and again, went over to Chong Min Su.

Paek Rak Jin was followed by Comrade Kum Song, who led Chang Dok Sun, Choe Jin Guk and a few other students. There were murmurs among the audience, mentioning the name of Comrade Kum Song. They seemed to be talking about his speech at Chiangnan Park. Everybody looked at him.

"Let's start, it is late," suggested Paek Rak Jin to Comrade Kum Song. Paek Rak Jin did not sit down and paced back and forth, still rubbing his face with his handkerchief.

He had had a very busy day. He had come over to the chapel supperless. He had been making a desperate effort to persuade Li Gap Mu, Sim Hak and Li Gwang Jin, the leaders of the three groups, to go ahead with their merger conference, whether An Muk was released or not.

A little later Comrade Kum Song got up on the rostrum. The packed audience grew quiet. Standing at the rostrum he looked the audience over for a moment.

"Dear friends, I would like to thank you very much for coming here this evening. As one of those who worked for this inauguration of the Korean Juvenile Association in Kirin allow me to thank you all."

Seated among the audience Paek Sun Hui felt her heart beat wildly. She had known Comrade Kum Song was a Marxist a month ago. Isn't it surprising that a Marxist is founding a juvenile association, she thought. This should cause a sensation among the students. Apart from the Marxist-Leninist students, are all the students going to unite, raise a red banner and start singing *Internationale*? Then those who did not know Comrade Kum Song was a Marxist would be really shaken. Paek Sun Hui was thrilled as she looked around the students with shining eyes.

Comrade Kum Song continued with his opening address.

"I won't speak long but I would like to tell you just one thing, that is, as youth and children deprived of the country, you must realise the importance of forming this Juvenile Association this evening and make this gathering meaningful. Now Mr. Paek Rak Jin will take the floor; he has been kind enough to sponsor this inauguration of our Juvenile Association."

As he came down from the rostrum, Paek Rak Jin gave a few coughs and walked towards the rostrum with a lively step. He wiped his face again before he began his speech.

"...The Vietnamese bird longs for the trees in the south and the Manchurian horse whinnies for a north wind. Even animals yearn for their native places. Much more so man, who is the lord of all creation. He thinks of his country and of its history. However much Japanese imperialist marauders work to plunder Korea and destroy the Korean people's spirit, Korean territory will stay for ever in a corner of the East. The pure spirit of the Korean nation flows down like a clear water from generation to generation, and their hatred for foreign enemies increases. You students were born to inherit this national spirit. Therefore, though living in this Kirin, you long for your homeland, look to the Korean skies with your clear eyes morning and evening. Also, in you students, the idea of opposing the Japanese who have occupied Korea lives as stoutly as the blood, flesh and bones you inherited from your fathers and

mothers. Therefore, in your age the struggle against the Japs must and can be waged more firmly than in the age of your fathers. So the Korean independence movement will be intensified and expanded generation after generation. It is this great idea, an idea of aspiring after greatness, which you must engrave on your hearts. This is the idea of 'Aim High' initiated by the late Mr. Kim Hyong Jik, the pioneer and leader of the independence movement, who was the father of the student who is presiding over this gathering...."

This last passage drew all the eyes to Comrade Kum Song. Excited murmurs continued among the audience apparently because many of them heard this for the first time.

Paek Rak Jin waited until the murmurs had died down, then he continued his speech. He poured out a long flow of fiery words, stressing that thanks to this idea of "Aim High" our independence movement was vigorous, indomitable and full of hope.

After that he explained how the students should be educated and how to train their bodies and minds to carry forward the Korean independence movement from one generation to another. Finally he pointed to the need to set up a juvenile organisation and emphasized that all youth and children in Kirin should join this organisation, observe its discipline and receive its training conscientiously.

The students listened to Paek Rak Jin, looking at his reddish face without blinking. Only a few students, including Pak Gwang Sik and Choe Jin Guk, sitting below the rostrum, were absorbed in putting the lists of members in order. Choe Jin Guk dictated each name submitted by different schools, while Chang Dok Sun and a bespectacled student wrote them down. Having been asked to make speeches of congratulation, Pastor Li Son Yop and Choe Gon kept their eyes half closed, thinking about what they were going to say. From time to time Pastor Li Son Yop coughed and crossed and uncrossed his legs, while the big Choe Gon sat very still like a huge tree that has firm roots in the ground. He was staring up into the air, meditatively, his thick lips pursed.

The meeting went ahead smoothly. The roll call of members was over and the programme and constitution were adopted. The object of the Juvenile Association was to work to promote the solidarity among the Korean youth and children and arm them firmly with anti-Japanese ideas. But, in fact, the object

was not fully revealed.

Comrade Kum Song formed this Juvenile Association, too, considering that the youth and students' movement had to be made to play an important role in linking workers and peasants with the revolutionary movement. Through this organisation, Comrade Kum Song intended to teach the youth and children class consciousness and train them in the daily struggle to become dependable reserves for the revolution, not just to educate them with anti-Japanese ideas.

Comrade Kum Song steered the meeting skillfully. He was elected President of the Korean Juvenile Association in Kirin, on a motion made by Paek Rak Jin. At this, the whole audience cheered.

Among the girl students, Gyong Ju was the first to cheer enthusiastically. She did not know why, but she felt her heart expand. And somehow she remembered the first passages in the *Communist Manifesto*.

"...Communism is already acknowledged by all European Powers to be itself a Power.

"...It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself...."

Gyong Ju felt that it was high time for the students in Kirin to make their majestic declaration and go into battle. She also felt as if a new banner had been hoisted right in the middle of Kirin. Her heart beat violently.

Pastor Li Son Yop went up to the rostrum to make a speech of congratulation. Raising his small face, he began to speak.

"The inauguration of the Juvenile Association is, indeed, a gratifying event. We should have formed this sort of organisation long ago. So this evening we are inaugurating it rather belatedly. But belated or not, the emergence of this organisation in Kirin means that all the youth and children in this town are basking in the favour of the Providence. No, I am not exaggerating. The youth and children have a bright future ahead of them, and they are like travellers who trek along a road with heavy loads on their shoulders. Among them are future great men, sages, great writers and scholars."

Pastor Li Son Yop stressed nationalism and patriotism which he claimed would foster tremendous forces in the end

that could achieve national independence.

"Ahem. Lastly, I would like to ask you children and young people one thing: you must take care of yourselves, in these complicated times. If you are not careful even for a moment, and do not watch where you are going, you might set out on the road to ruin. What could lead you to ruin? They are some odd new ideas spreading today in many places. New things are always dangerous. At a glance the new idea in vogue is appealing and seems to be based on truth but, actually, it confuses people's minds and entices them to challenge justice. Once you are entrapped, everything will be over. It will lead to the ruin of morality, ethics, humanity and, in the long run, it will lead to the ruin of nations and of mankind as a whole."

Pastor Li Son Yop cried out, banging the table ineffectually with his tiny, plump child's hand. He hated socialism. But today he was attacking socialism because apart from his hatred for socialism he had a grudge. He, too, had been arrested together with An Muk and had been kept in the jail of the Police Agency for a fortnight or so, where the interrogators asked him how long An Muk had been socialist. Quick-tempered, he turned on the interrogators to slap them in the face. But he was nevertheless released. This had led him to believe that it was socialism that had been undermining the Korean independence movement. He had a great urge to denounce socialism, but he contained himself, and had merely inserted a mild criticism in his speech. As Li Son Yop attacked socialism, many students glared at the speaker, their eyes shooting out flames. However, Choe Gon remained silent and heavy as a rock. He seemed to be paying no heed to what Li Son Yop was saying.

When his speech was finished Li Son Yop returned to his seat, wiping his perspiring face with a handkerchief. He sat down and gently handled his moustache.

Now, Choe Gon rose to his feet. As he reached the rostrum, the students applauded him. Blood rushed to Li Son Yop's face which turned crimson.

Paek Rak Jin, sitting beside him, was very unhappy about Li Son Yop's challenge to socialism in his speech. He was not a socialist himself, but he thought that this meeting was the wrong place for such an attack.

"Dear students who love truth!" cried out Choe Gon, holding the edge of the table with his hands and shaking his head; his voice rang out across the room. It was so deep and

husky that it seemed to have dispelled the impressions of Li Son Yop's soft voice out of the minds of the audience.

"You are youth and children who love truth and dash forward with high spirits and enterprise in order to put human ideals into effect. It is you who decide the destiny of mankind and advance, holding a light over the turbid current of society. You vied with each other to come to this place in order to carry out this mission. For that we must congratulate you with both hands!"

Indeed, Choe Gon raised and waved his both hands. He was an experienced speaker, and he gestured freely. All of a sudden, Choe Gon's voice became low and soft. He bent forward and in an earnest appealing voice, said.

"Dear friends, I would like to ask you a question. Suppose...suppose you love justice. And suppose you were doctors by profession. And suppose a man in rags came to your hospital and asked you to visit a patient. Out of humanity, you would not refuse his request. The visitor is very grateful, leads the way, taking your bag. You follow this man past the street lined with large imposing mansions into a dank, dark back-alley where the gutters overflowed with foul water carrying all sorts of germs and the alley was littered with garbage. You go through this alley and finally the man stops in front of a leaning hovel. As you go into the room, you see that the ceiling has fallen in and the floor has sunk. There you find a groaning patient who is all skin and bone, little more than a skeleton. And at her side some children huddle together, their bellies swollen and their ribs standing out. You open your bag and check up the patient very carefully. As you have a lot of clinical experience you know right away what is wrong. It is too much work and malnutrition—a social disease widespread in this modern society. Now you must prescribe. Dear young students who love justice!"

Here he restored his ringing voice he had spoken with at the beginning and jerked up his head.

"I would like to ask you: could you really prescribe for that disease? The patient needs fresh air, a bright and sunny house, and enough food and rest. Friends, could you advise that patient to go and stay in a decent house, to eat good food and plenty of it and to rest? Friends, our conscience, our sense of justice would make you weep tears of blood in such a situation. And it will make you shudder when you realise that

the majority of people in our society are such patients. So you would throw away your useless stethoscope and syringe, and resolve to join the class struggle. You must do that. You must become revolutionaries of proletarian emancipation, in order to give food to the hungry children, to bring sunshine to such hovels and give the poor a chance to lead reasonable lives. Yes. What the present age needs is not weak-kneed humanitarians who will take care of individual patients but revolutionaries who will pull up these roots of social rottenness. We must raise the banner of socialist revolution and eliminate all contradictions from this moribund society."

Choe Gon banged the table with his large fist. His "socialist hair" was disheveled and shook. And the audience cheered. Choe Gon's speech had had a big effect on the young students, although the knowledgeable were less impressed, for Choe Gon had, without any explanations, repeated a story he had learned by heart, a story from a cheap pamphlet you could find in any bookshop.

"What is this? Why does he make a communist speech instead of a speech of congratulation?"

Li Son Yop shook his arm in anger and tried to jump to his feet. He was held back, however, by Chong Min Su and Li Pil Su who sat on either side of him. The audience breathed harder. Nobody rose and attacked anybody by name, but everybody stared with a sharp eye.

The atmosphere could not but be strained because first Li Son Yop had hit out at socialism and then Choe Gon bluntly advocated socialist revolution. Not only the grown-ups but also the students and children who were divided through their different connections were involved in the vortex of an invisible fight.

But Choe Gon, for a considerable while, yelled at the students to rise up for the socialist revolution, striking the table with his huge hand, before he left the rostrum like a triumphant general. Rubbing his face with his handkerchief he went back to his seat, sitting with his back to Li Son Yop. Li Son Yop with a sharp-lined nose gave a quick glance at Choe Gon and crossed his legs so that his body did not touch the latter's. You could have cut the atmosphere with a knife.

"May I say a few words, sir?" asked Comrade Kum Song. He had not intended to speak, but in this atmosphere he had to intervene.

"Go ahead. The President must say something," replied the red-faced Paek Rak Jin, noticing the terrible atmosphere in the meeting.

As Comrade Kum Song went over to the table, all the students watched him. Chae Gyong and his sister were strained, wondering how he was going to tone down an atmosphere that might explode any moment. Soon his vibrant and dignified voice resounded over the waves of the complicated feelings that prevailed among the audience.

"Friends, this evening we have held a successful meeting for the inauguration of the Juvenile Association, thanks to the distinguished guests and to you students who have attended this gathering with sincerity. The inauguration of the Korean Juvenile Association in Kirin has an epoch-making significance for us youth, students and children, in advancing united in will and purpose."

Comrade Kum Song likened the inauguration of the Juvenile Association to hoisting a sail on a large boat floating in the sea. He said that everybody on board must work together, rowing and steering well, so that the boat could ride over the harsh waves and heave to a port of hope where there was the lighthouse. He then explained the programme and constitution article by article, saying that these were provisions they must observe in their navigation through the wild waves.

The students listened in silence.

He continued.

"We are a new generation who have shouldered the destiny of Korea. Korea is at the crossroads of rebirth or destruction. The Japanese imperialist marauders have turned our Golden Tapestry of Three Thousand *Ri* into a dark hell. In Korea today the workers and peasants cannot live, nor intellectuals nor small or even larger businessmen, even some quite sizable Korean capitalists complain that they cannot live on. In the streets, the villages, at the seaside, in the mountains, people are shedding tears of blood and crying out for help. The workers go on strike, the peasants have tenancy disputes, they are kicked off their land to wander the streets or pack up their meagre property and leave their home villages; that is what is happening in our country now. And this grim reality is grabbing our shoulders and asking us where we are going and for what. We hear mothers' voices, old people's voices, children's voices calling for help, the painful voices of the whole nation calling

for help. If we cannot hear these voices, we are not sons and daughters of Korea."

Comrade Kum Song looked around the audience. Chae Gyong and his sister were captivated. This was the first time they had heard him speak. Many people made speeches this evening, ranting, shouting, or in really elegant phrases. But Comrade Kum Song spoke differently; he spoke from the heart, and his appeal was based on his warm great love, on his desire to hold his brothers in his embrace. His speech, his features, his movements, and even his voice showed his great personality.

"In this way the Japanese imperialists are driving all Koreans into the mire of death. Those who do not hate Japanese imperialism we cannot call Koreans; they must be condemned as quislings, as traitors to our nation. In spite of difference in political views, property status and religious beliefs, many of you who are gathered here hate Japanese imperialism and are determined to dedicate your lives to fight and throw these marauders out of our land. We are travellers and we have a long way to go. We shall have to cover a thorny path if we are to see the day when the Japanese imperialists are driven out and our country is free and prosperous again. It is true that there can be and, in fact, are some who have different views with regard to how to cover this long path. But we must never forget that all of us have one great idea in common—that we must save our country and our people. If we have ideas that are not based on this what use are they to us? After all, our hearts are all burning with this one great idea. So I would like to propose that everybody should here solemnly pledge to achieve this great goal; that we should set other differences aside and become united firmly and brace our feet to follow this long and thorny path together, so as to kick the Japanese imperialists out of our beloved homeland. On this long thorny road we must cross high mountains and deep oceans. We may suffer many setbacks and we may shed our blood. But, despite all hardships, we must keep moving ahead, and go on fighting the enemy. Our only fear is that we might become disunited, for it is in unity that will find the will and strength and courage to face this road. Unity first, unity second. The downtrodden and maltreated, and all the anti-Japanese forces that can unite together must unite as firmly as a rock and with their united power we must drive the Japanese imperialist marauders out of our country as soon as possible and bring prosperity to our

beautiful Golden Tapestry of Three Thousand *Ri*.

"Dear friends, let all of us unite! Our Korean Juvenile Association in Kirin will warmly support and respect everybody who come out with such a resolve."

Smiling, Comrade Kum Song raised and waved his hand. There was a thunderous applause. The antagonism created by Li Son Yop and Choe Gon's speeches had vanished like last year's snow, and everybody was delighted and relieved. Paek Rak Jin's face had also brightened up and he clapped his thick hands vigorously, Li Son Yop and Choe Gon also clapped though still with their backs to each other.

"I am really surprised, brother."

"Don't get too excited," Chae Gyong told his sister. But he too was experiencing a thrill of excitement, his heart thumping against his ribs. He was not yet able to make a sound analysis of the speech, but his heart was warmly touched by something new and great, something like Comrade Kum Song's whole idea.

When the meeting was declared closed, there was a great hubbub in the place. In this commotion Song Chun Bo rose and said that the newly elected officials of the Juvenile Association should stay behind. Now, under Comrade Kum Song's guidance, he was extremely active.

CHAPTER V

RISING WAVES (2)

1

That evening Sin Dong Ho wrote a poem at his desk as usual. He jotted down a few lines, crossed them out, rewrote them and crossed them out again. He repeated the process several times because he was not happy with them. Then he rested his elbows on the desk and sank in thought, resting his forehead on clenched fists.

"Why don't you write home?" asked Bong Suk's mother, looking up at her brother from the boarded kitchen floor.

"What's the good of writing a letter?"

"What do you mean by that? You received the sad news that your father's business has failed. If you get a letter from him you should answer it." Bong Suk's mother remonstrated with her brother.

She was sewing a quilt cover with a thick needle. It had been stitched up many times over the years now and you could hardly see what it had originally looked like. It was difficult to push the needle through the rough cover, so after every few stitches, she had to rub the needle through her hair.

"Don't worry too much. If you want me to write a letter, I will write it. But my letter wouldn't help recover him from his ruin. I doubt whether his business has really failed, though. Father is the same kind of worrier as you; when the wine doesn't sell because of the depression, father gets in a state and starts writing letters all round, I'm sure."

"Can you still talk like that after reading the letter?"

"The letter is the letter," returned Sin Dong Ho somewhat sulkily, piling up the books and papers littered on his desk.

Sin Dong Ho's father ran a small distillery in a small town in Kangwon Province, and Sin Dong Ho had just received a

letter from home. It said that the distillery could not survive because the Japs had come and built a big distillery, with the result that small distilleries as Sin Dong Ho's father's could not sell their spirits. So his distillery was on the brink of ruin and his father unable to face this misfortune alone had written to his son and daughter about a family misfortune that they ought to know. Having received the letter Bong Suk's mother wept secretly for quite a while. Unlike his sister Sin Dong Ho was utterly indifferent. Not that his father's complaints were groundless as he had just said. He himself had never carried the burdens of life, and his views on life were different from his sister's. He thought that life went on as long as one lived, and since one's life was spent in the confused, harsh waves of society, one was destined to be pestered. However, life continued while one was pestered, so it was unnecessary to weep about it. This was his way of thinking.

"I have been thinking of having a talk with you; you are not behaving like a man, like one whose country has been lost. An ordinary young man would grit his teeth if his family has been ruined by the Japs."

"Humph, what's the use of that?"

"So you're not even angry? You don't want to take revenge on the Japs?"

"What if I do get mad? Do you know any way of making the country independent?"

Sin Dong Ho leapt up suddenly. He was very angry.

"We'll have to find a way. Will you just sit here with folded arms?"

"That's what your husband used to say."

"And what's wrong with that? He died fighting in the independence movement."

Sin Dong Ho did not answer and paced up and down the room.

In actual fact, Sin Dong Ho was not as indifferent as his sister suggested. He did hate the Japanese imperialists and thought it necessary to drive them out and win independence for Korea. But to him it seemed a sheer impossibility. So, when his sister talked about her husband's death, his heart bled, despite his apparent callousness.

He had been to many meetings of independence fighters and socialists in Kirin. And he had seen them squabbling among themselves. Gradually he had become disgusted with it all. A

lot of people arguing angrily, but to what end, he thought. They always claimed to be seeking ways of achieving independence, but was there really any way to achieve it?

On the other hand, he sometimes wanted to smash this discouraging situation. Anyhow, it was repugnant and had driven him to resignation. He had given up everything.

In this state of mind, he had retired into his own imagination, his own dreams, into his world of decadent poetry, a private ivory tower.

Presently Sin Dong Ho came out of the house. He walked up the street, his clenched fists pushed into his trouser pockets. The night was advanced, the overflowing life of the town had crawled back beneath the eaves and even the trees on either side of the street stood asleep. The moon which looked as if veiled in a thin net shed light as if in a dreamland.

And Sin Dong Ho was thinking about a lake of agonizing dreams. Tonight a celestial woman played the flute there. Sin Dong Ho followed the tune of the flute, in an endeavour to find inspiration.

He walked on under the trees. A crowd of people burst out of Pastor Li Son Yop's chapel as the Juvenile Association meeting ended. Light streamed out of the open door onto the street and groups of excited students surged down the hill. Sin Dong Ho, who had been seeking inspiration for his poetry, stopped under a tree. He had no heart to walk towards the students who were surging out. After a few moments of hesitation, he turned on his heel and walked into a side street. He liked quiet, lonely streets. And the moonlight shining over the side street was dear to him. He walked on along the side street, leaving the noisy crowd behind.

After the meeting Comrade Kum Song stayed behind with the Juvenile Association committee to discuss their future tasks. He returned to his lodging late at night. As he opened the door, Bong Suk's mother shrank from Sin Dong Ho's desk. She was holding a handful of manuscripts.

"You are late."

"Yes. Why don't you go to bed?"

"Would you please look at this? My brother writes away at this stuff night and day. What is he writing? Tonight too he sat here for hours writing this and then went off God knows where. He didn't go to the meeting although you had advised him to so earnestly."

Bong Suk's mother spread out a bundle of papers covered in changes and corrections.

"This is what they call a poem."

"Poem? What is that? Something like the *Kwandong Ballads*?"

"Ha ha ha. Yes, something like that."

"So, now he is busy writing *Kwandong Ballads*?" Bong Suk's mother stared at his face in wide-eyed surprise.

"No, Aunt, Comrade Dong Ho won't go astray. I am sure he will become a revolutionary poet."

"I wish to God he would. I talked to him just now, but he is as naive as a child who knows nothing. He has no idea what is going on around him; his father spoiled him as the child of his old age. He is like a blind man with eyes that look perfect."

"Don't worry too much, aunt. He, too, will take the right road sooner or later."

"Well, I'm pinning my hopes on you. Who else will make a man of him? When my old man was alive, I talked with him and brought my only brother here to get him educated properly. He should realise that and become a good man, but he does not understand." Bong Suk's mother said as she collected up the papers to put back on his desk. As always, her words carried her sorrow for her dead husband.

Sin Dong Ho came home just before dawn. Comrade Kum Song who had been reading a book smiled faintly when he saw him, wet with dew.

"Where have you been?"

"I went for a walk by the Sungari."

"And did you find inspiration?"

"You think it comes that easily?" said Sin Dong Ho, dejected.

A little later Comrade Kum Song put out the light and they both went to bed.

"Comrade Dong Ho," Comrade Kum Song said quietly in the darkness. Sin Dong Ho was lying very still.

"I had expected you at this evening's meeting. I waited but you did not come; I even thought of sending for you...."

Sin Dong Ho was silent.

"Seriously, I would like to talk to you. I have nothing against your writing poetry. The question is what poetry. I have read just a poem of yours, which shows considerable talent. But, look here, who will read a poem like that? And what is

the use of a poet who has no readers? It means he isn't writing for society, for his nation. Why don't you use your talent to write revolutionary poems?"

Sin Dong Ho stayed silent, but he sighed deeply, as if to show that he was listening, for he had heard all this before. Some evenings it made Sin Dong Ho feel defiant. Yet that made Comrade Kum Song still more persuasive in his advice to write revolutionary poems.

"And your sister tells me how worried she is about you. What are we, you and I, studying here for? Is it that we may live in comfort or to rise up and have a good career? We young Koreans are surely not in a position to think that way. We have a heavy task, to win back our country. There can be no greater objective than that. So we must put everything we have got into this. Comrade Sin, your poetic talent should also be dedicated to it. Do you hear, Comrade Sin?"

"I do. I am not free from anguish these days. I fear lest I could really specialize in literature...."

"Why not? We have a great need for a revolutionary literature. You must write many revolutionary poems."

Sin Dong Ho did not say a word. Comrade Kum Song wanted to continue with the subject, but he stopped talking because it was too late. As soon as Sin Dong Ho fell asleep, he got up. He was about to put on the light to finish reading the book, but decided against it so as not to wake up Sin Dong Ho. So he got up quietly and went out.

He walked up and down the yard, deep in thought. How shall I guide the newly-formed Juvenile Association? This new organisation is within the lawful unlike those DIU set up in Huatien or the Saenal Juvenile Union formed at Fusung. In order to quickly build up mass foundations and draw students and youth into the communist reserves in this chaotic Kirin, we must use legal organisations. We have now formed the first. How should we run it to benefit the revolution? How can we get the most advantage out of its legality? There were many new problems for him to think about—the problems of linking up the legal and illegal struggle, of developing the hard core of the movement to expand the underground organisations, and so on. He thought about a lot of possible solutions and the problems these would bring.

The scenes of this evening's meeting came back to him and he saw again Li Son Yop's conspicuous face and Choe Gon

wielding his fists; and he remembered, too, the invisible entanglement of feelings at the audience.

Comrade Kum Song saw it all as a difficult forest he would have to cut his way through to advance the revolution.

2

The next day was a Sunday, and early in the morning Comrade Kum Song visited Kwon Sim. He had been deeply worried about him, because despite his invitation Kwon Sim had not been at the meeting last night. Since he had heard that Kwon Sim was always cooped up in his study, he wanted to draw him into the practical side of things, for once his attitude became more positive, he would be able to do his bit in the revolutionary struggle. That was really why he had invited Kwon Sim.

Comrade Kum Song found him writing at his desk, though it seemed that he had not yet had breakfast.

"What are you writing?"

"Oh, I'm really glad to see you. I was going to bring you this article. Do sit down."

"What the article?"

"It's for a newspaper—it could be serialised. Do please, look at it, it's finished. It was rather difficult to write, but I enjoyed doing it."

Kwon Sim was terribly excited. The lids of his sunken eyes were lined with pointed eyelashes and in front of him a wisp of smoke curled up from the ashtray. Kwon Sim took a few moments to get his papers together, straightening the edges against the desk.

Now, he said he had better read the article aloud, because of his bad handwriting.

The title was *An Outline of the Labour Movement in Korea* and it dealt with the early twenties.

Then came a quote from the *Communist Manifesto*:

"...Not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians...."

Starting out with the general strike in Pusan, the article went on to discuss all the strikes since the March the First Movement, including figures even on the number of strikers and their occupations. This conscious advance was an inevitable effect of the capitalist grabbing the profits, while the workers, shedding sweat and blood, were driven into the abyss of death.

"...Most of the Korea's working class were recruited from the exodus from the villages. The capitalists could get cheap labour, paying wages well below the value of the work. The workers worked long hours for tiny wages—the average working day in the food and textile industries was longer than 12 hours, while the miners' position was still worse. Forced work underground 12 hours and more a day, the lack of safety measures meant that every month more people were hurt or killed in needless accidents. The awful working condition, the intolerably long hours and tiny wages—well below the barest minimum required to feed a family—brought the capitalists tremendous profits. Small, fragmentary industries predominate in Korea. In order to compete with imports and still make profits in competition with large concerns, they have no other way than to exploit the workers still more cruelly..."

The article cited examples of capitalist exploitation and outrageous conditions in various factories. The passages on the case of the Pyongyang hosiery factory touched the heart.

"...At the Pyongyang hosiery factory they make the workers buy their own knitting machines by monthly instalments. And when the machines are paid for do the workers own them? Not a bit of it. There is a trick by which the actual ownership remains with the boss even then. Any attempt to resist this and the sword of the sacrosanctity of property will hit you. So the girl workers are forced to buy machines for their employers. Out of their meagre wages, they have to pay for the machines, repairs and maintenance, for raw materials expended for the rejects, so-called welfare expenses, sanitation expenses—the lot. So how can they make a living? And what happens to the girls that are thrown out?..."

"As a result, the Korean working class were forced to fight, to fight for their very existence. The ideas of Marx and Lenin and the October Revolution gave a tremendous impetus to the struggle of the working masses. Alongside the influence

of the revolution, new ideas started to get through the grass-roots and whisper truth into the workers' ears, awaken them and make them understand their society and gain confidence in themselves.

"This awakening united them and led to the formation of trade unions all over the country, which, through workers' self-consciousness and the idea of unity began to eat into the wall of capital. The rapid inflow of foreign capital resulted in a solid Korean working class and helped to sharpen their weapons for resisting capitalism.

"However, we must take a long cool look at the present labour movement. Because to move ahead, we must see our weaknesses, and learn from them. The Korean labour movement is still in its infancy, strikes are localised and sporadic and we suffer many bloody setbacks. This picture can be seen in other countries, too. It is a bitter common to the whole labour movement."

Kwon Sim cited a number of experiences in the labour movement abroad. And he stressed that if the Korean labour movement was to develop, it must become integrated and work for a single goal. In the last article, he quoted Marx's proposition that "The revolution is the locomotive of history" and pointed out that anyway the Korean labour movement in the early twenties was a bugle call heralding a new era of history.

When he had finished the last article, Kwon Sim picked up his bundles of manuscripts and straightened them out.

Comrade Kum Song sat up—he had been leaning against the wall.

"Do give me your opinion."

Kwon Sim said, lighting a cigarette. Comrade Kum Song noticed that his hand was shaking.

"Please tell me. I won't be satisfied until I hear your view."

"I must study it. How can I answer right away?" Comrade Kum Song tried to avoid an immediate reply. He did not want to criticise the lengthy article on the spot, especially as Kwon had written it with passion, in spite of his low state. The article was clearly much too dogmatic, but it would take some time to convince him of that.

"You needn't go into detail; just give me some idea."

Comrade Kum Song still hesitated and Kwon Sim asked for his views more adamantly, forcing him to pass judgement.

"The article is not bad. I think you have given a solid out-

line of the labour movement in Korea. But, in my opinion, you need to give a clearer explanation of the peculiarities of the Korean working class."

"Peculiarities of the Korean working class?"

"Yes. It would be better to give more on this for the Korean working class is different from that in other countries. As you indicate briefly in your article the radical advance of the Korean working class is not only a result of class but national consciousness. Because the Japanese imperialists control Korea's economic arteries, Korean workers are plundered by aggressors as well as being exploited by the capitalists. I think you should lay greater emphasis on this."

Kwon Sim's face turned a trifle pale.

"I also think that you should analyse Korea's economy as fully colonial economy. It should be made clear that Korea's economy is not developing in free capitalist competition but being 'developed' under a Japanese imperialist plan for aggressive military plunder. In other words, it is being developed simply to plunder Korea's natural resources and manpower."

Kwon Sim listened, his face pale. But, noticing that Comrade Kum Song still hesitated, he asked him to continue.

"Better not; you must be very tired."

"That's all right. I am not at all tired. Please go on."

"I am only giving you suggestions, but in my opinion," Comrade Kum Song went on, "your article seems to give too much weight to economic analysis. Of course you have to deal with wages, working hours and the profits the capitalists squeeze out. But the article has to have a firm political standpoint and it should explain the purposes of the economic struggle. In other words, as I have already said, you need to explain in detail the specific features of the Korean working class, and the enemies they are fighting and show a clear direction and a practical approach."

"But surely if I put too much stress on the Korean workers' features, then people will inevitably conclude that our labour movement is different from other countries; and I don't see that. As is said in my article, I don't think it is necessary to differentiate Korea's labour movement from those in other countries, for example, in such countries as Marx discussed. It seems to me that the Korean labour movement has the same object—to overthrow the capitalists; how can there be any other objective?"

"That is just it, I think that view is wrong. Don't you think

you are simply applying theory by rule of thumb without regard for practice? That's why you made that leftist error in that speech of yours, which was interrupted the other day."

"What does that mean?"

"As I suggested some time ago, I think you took an extremist line that was unsuitable for the actual conditions of the Korean revolution in your speech that evening. You cannot treat the national question in this nihilistic way. The Korean revolution is a revolution in which national liberation and class emancipation are very closely linked. However, the problem of national liberation is vital and it is the more urgent task. And should we really regard the national question merely as an aspect of class contradictions? It is in this context that some people say that Communists only care about class struggle, not about the nation. In my view, your article and your speech both show that you have failed to apply the Marxist-Leninist method to the specific features of our revolution. If we apply Marxism-Leninism properly, we can map out our revolutionary policy. We cannot deal with the Korean working class as an abstract. Since we are working for the Korean revolution, working in Korea, we must consider all that is peculiar to the Korean working class and the Korean labour movement. That is why in amplifying theory too, we must use our own brains and develop the theory in conformity with our reality and our own revolution. We need a theory that will help our revolutionary practice, for what's the use of theory alone? I often think about these problems these days. If we are masters of the Korean revolution, we must always think and act with this in mind. And we must be masters of our own ideas, for without that we cannot write, sense or act correctly. Of course, all this is not just about your article, you realise that, I'm sure."

Kwon Sim did not reply. He put out his cigarette and lit another.

"Don't be too nervous. You might do well to think about this for a while."

"I will cool down and think it over. The question is too serious to argue out at once."

"That would be better."

Kwon Sim was smoking hard and, the hand that held his cigarette was shaking slightly.

Comrade Kum Song had not expected Kwon Sim to reach the right viewpoint without considerable agony, and it was rather no bad thing that he had criticised him so frankly today.

In the end Comrade Kum Song forgot to ask Kwon Sim why he had not come to last night's meeting. He rose to his feet, thinking he would come back later.

After Comrade Kum Song had gone, Kwon Sim was deeply worried. He was shaken to the core and his mind was in a whirl. Take a master's attitude to revolution and be the master in thinking—these words held a gleam of truth. He had said the question was so serious that he could not argue it out on the spot but, in fact, he was at a loss for words, or rather, he felt as if in the end he would have to agree.

Kwon Sim picked up the manuscript and turned over the pages to have another look. Whenever he wrote or spoke he always felt he was getting stuck and failing to reach the heights, but now he began to see where he was going wrong. He felt as if he had found the key to the real problems in his theory. He pulled out his handkerchief and rubbed his forehead with a shaking hand.

After his visit to Kwon Sim, Comrade Kum Song walked down the busiest part of Honan Street, when he ran into Choe Gon.

Choe Gon was delighted. He took Comrade Kum Song's hand in his own big hand and shook it vigorously.

"Where are you going?"

"I came out to go to the bookshop."

"You read as much as ever. I have just been to the Sungari for a walk. Let's go to my lodgings, you can go to the bookshop later. Mr. Wol Pa is there now, the Mr. Wol Pa, who is a walking Marxist-Leninist encyclopedia. I told him about your speech last night. He was glad to hear about it and he said he would like to meet you. He has already heard about your speech at Chiangnan Park and he is very anxious to meet you." Choe Gon said, pulling at Comrade Kum Song's sleeve. Reluctantly, Comrade Kum Song followed him.

Choe Gon was wearing a reddish brown Western suit with dark stripes and carrying a walking stick as thick as his arm. The thick stick was twisted and had a leather strap on the handle. Choe Gon slipped it over his hand and gripped the handle. He walked leisurely, leaning on his stick. They walked a long way along a brick wall and past the back of a noodle house before they got to Choe Gon's lodgings. When they reached the yard, Cho Chang Jin, (nicknamed Wol Pa Junior) was coming out with a bespectacled student. He was very pleased to see Comrade

Kum Song. Comrade Kum Song shook hands with them.

"Comrade President, many thanks for the trouble you took last night," Cho Chang Jin said.

"Not at all."

"I hope to see you often now."

"Thank you. Please do."

As Comrade Kum Song talked with Cho Chang Jin, Choe Gon asked Cho and his friend why they were leaving so soon.

"I have borrowed a pamphlet."

"That's good. You must read a great deal."

Parting with Cho Chang Jin and his friend, Choe Gon went up onto the earthen porch where there was a pair of pointed shoes, and Comrade Kum Song followed him.

When they opened the door, Comrade Kum Song saw a man with a watch chain hanging from his black waistcoat pocket sitting at the desk and writing. He had a darkish moustache and his face was so haggard that, at first glance, he looked as if he were recovering from a long illness.

"Mr. Wol Pa, this is our Comrade President whom I spoke to you about." Choe Gon quickly introduced Comrade Kum Song to Wol Pa.

"Ah, you are welcome here; I wanted to meet you," said Wol Pa and got up to his feet and shook hands with Comrade Kum Song. He shook hands with such vigour that Comrade Kum Song's hand was almost numb.

"Do sit down. The room is untidy, though—this is the way we proletarians live."

Wol Pa sat down again and picked up a packet of cigarettes. Although he was thin, he was quite lively.

As asked by Wol Pa and Choe Gon, Comrade Kum Song went down to the lower part of the room and seated himself, and looked around the room. There were books everywhere. And in one corner there was a huge pile of newspapers.

"I've just finished the history of social evolution. It is still rather hard to explain the origin of private property, you know." Wol Pa said and arranged the manuscript he had been working on.

At present both Choe Gon and Wol Pa were scurrying about without sleep in order to open up their road. Their group's sharp confrontation with the "Koryo Communist Youth League" was their current trouble. They had been trying to deal with this at all costs, so as to unite all the socialist forces in Manchuria

under the "General Bureau of the Korean Communist Party in Manchuria" and to take control. To this end they had argued hotly and made fiery speeches everywhere they went. In their opinion, once they gained control in Manchuria, they could add their forces to the Tuesday group which was losing ground in the party at Seoul. Moreover, they thought they would shift the main base of the Korean communist movement to Manchuria. That was their dream. They were going to discuss how to expand their group's influence at a short training course to be held in Chientao for the local organizers, and Wol Pa was preparing the lecture plan.

"In a word, the socialist revolution is a movement that demands genius. It is extremely difficult to be fully versed in Marxist-Leninist theory. Comrade President, I was told that you made a speech last night. Cho Chang Jin also heard you speak and praised you to skies. He is my disciple, he is a clever Marxian student." Wol Pa said this, pushing the manuscripts to a corner of the desk and blowing out tobacco smoke.

At first glance he looked rather frivolous. In fact, years ago he had been a teacher at a private school in the fishing village on Korea's east coast where Cho Chang Jin's family lived. He had taught Cho Chang Jin there, so he boastfully called Cho Chang Jin his disciple.

For a few moments Comrade Kum Song looked at this man with his unusually narrow forehead, a man who was so passionate and yet so frivolous, and he wondered what Wol Pa was going to say.

"Your speech was serious and it captivated the whole audience, they say. That is good. But I was not sure about one point which I discussed with Comrade Choe Gon last night. According to Comrade Choe Gon, you argued that the small and middle entrepreneurs and even Korean capitalists are suffering from the Japanese imperialist occupation, not to mention the workers and peasants; and that as all of them are oppressed and downtrodden, they must unite. And I assert that this is impossible. How can we unite with even our local bourgeoisie, while calling for a socialist revolution? The bourgeoisie are inevitably an opponent in a socialist revolution. But how could that student commit such an error? This was my argument. But Comrade Choe Gon's only answer was that he was sure of what he had heard. Quite often we may feel that this sort of debate on theory is very tiresome. But I argued with him all night, without knowing whose argument

It was I was refuting."

Wol Pa smiled. Comrade Kum Song also smiled and said.

"You were attacking my argument that the Korean socialists at the present stage of the revolution can and must unite with non-comprador capitalists in order to fight Japanese imperialism. Clearly Mr. Choe Gon put it well."

"Why, you mean it is true? Then it is alien to the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, it is not consistent with formal theory either. How could it be the socialist revolution to unite with the very local capitalists, the enemies of socialist revolution?" Wol Pa looked thunderstruck and stared in Comrade Kum Song's face, still puffing hard at his cigarette.

"I don't believe that at this stage the socialist revolution should be carried out immediately."

"Then, then what do you believe? Are you really a Marxist-Leninist, Comrade President?"

"I am a Communist. But my view is that at the present stage, the task of the Korean revolution is not to go ahead with socialist revolution right away but to drive out the Japanese imperialists first and deal with their accomplices, the feudal landlords, comprador capitalists, pro-Japanese elements and traitors to our nation. So I do not think that we should attack the propertied class as a whole."

"Hum...so you mean a bourgeois democratic revolution, eh?"

Wol Pa rubbed out his cigarette with a trembling hand, and took another out. Comrade Kum Song did not think it necessary to talk with Wol Pa too long. He wanted to end the argument quickly.

"I consider that at present we are concerned with an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution. This is not based on a subjective desire, but on the practical situation in our country, which under Japanese occupation also still has largely feudal socio-economic relations. But in this revolution the working class and Communists must not lose their leadership to the bourgeoisie, but must hold it more firmly and enhance the leading role of the working class."

"Whose line is that? Where is the theoretical basis? I have never read that in any classics."

"That is my own idea. The theoretical basis is Marxism-Leninism. Perhaps you have not read it in the classics. The classical writers did not produce their theory for a colonial, semi-

feudal society such as ours. Therefore, we who are engaged in the Korean revolution must develop theory ourselves, by applying the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism creatively to the Korean revolution."

"Um...I don't know; I don't understand that theory..." muttered Wol Pa, shaking his head.

Choe Gon, who had been watching with a cynical look, interposed.

"Mr. Wol Pa, you should be enlightened enough to recognize that there are quite a few other people who are versed in Marxist theory as well as you."

Choe Gon's sarcasm changed Wol Pa's colour, but he did not comment. Comrade Kum Song could imagine that these two men had debated on this problem all night and that Wol Pa had bragged that he could beat anybody to it on theory.

The atmosphere became very strained. Choe broke the silence, by saying: "You needn't be so put out. Come to our place often, so that we get in closer touch with each other."

"I'm not put out. But as I am a student, I am afraid I won't be able to come often." Comrade Kum Song replied curtly, thinking that he need not mix with these people.

As Comrade Kum Song came out of Choe Gon's lodgings and walked into the main street, he heaved a breath of relief. Are these the Marxists with such big reputations? he wondered. They are different from Kwon Sim. He has fallen into dogmatism, but he is genuinely interested in the revolution and works hard to contribute with his theory. But Wol Pa and Choe Gon are another kettle of fish; they are trying to apply individual propositions from the classics that they have learned by rote to the Korean revolution and are frantically manoeuvring to achieve their foul political ambitions. They shout out that the socialist revolution must be carried out in Korea immediately. Their "theory" is known in Korea as well as in Kirin. But I have found that I cannot discuss Marxism-Leninism with either Wol Pa or Choe Gon. All I could see was the gloomy shadow of their scheme to increase their own group's influence. Though I only talked with them quite briefly, I could feel it.

He became thoughtful as he walked down the street under the green budding branches of the trees. The noise of the jostling crowds did not reach his ears. I feel I have received a big impetus today, he thought, I talked to Kwon Sim about his speech and soon after, I had this unpleasant argument with Wol

Pa. In the last analysis, both my talk with Kwon Sim and my debate with Wol Pa were an attack on dogmatism and "theory" divorced from practice. Ever since my arrival in Kirin, I have felt that neither dogma nor nihilism are confined to Wol Pa or Choe Gon; quite a few Marxian students clamour like Wol Pa or Choe Gon. Maybe they are under their influence. Anyhow, nobody is looking at Marxism from the standpoint of the Korean revolution. Why? Why have they all got bogged down in this chaos? What are the defects? Isn't it because those who claim to be adhering to Marxism-Leninism do not approach the Korean revolution with their own spirit and their own consciousness? Is it not that as the master of his own destiny, man must be able to recognize matter and actively subordinate everything to him and create everything? If he has not such spirit and active creativity, how can he be called a man, the master of this world? In nature, man is independent, not servile. When man loses such spirit and such consciousness, he cannot believe in his own strength and cannot analyse or understand ready-made formulas and theories with a creative mind, much less apply them.

Kwon Sim cannot readily recognize the peculiarities of the Korean labour movement because of his dogmatic limitations, but Wol Pa, Choe Gon and their ilk who are hell-bent for political hegemony, have no spirit of independence, and obviously they are attempting to lead the Korean revolution astray, for the present task is to oppose imperialism and feudalism.

Comrade Kum Song wiped the sweat off his forehead. He was horrified that this turbid water should be flooding the political arena of Kirin. This was a grave matter.

He felt more keenly than ever before that this situation had to be set right.

This turbid stream must not be left alone, he thought, this turbid stream that flows against the times without a destination, only with empty talk. I must save those who cannot see ahead in this turbid water one by one, must bring them to their senses. I must make them fight firmly as masters of the Korean revolution. I will never take a wrong road. I will never step aside from this road, whatever criticism and slander may be hurled at me. This is the only way, because it is based on Korean conditions; it is the way to win the Korean revolution.

Comrade Kum Song became excited and his body overflowed with vigour. He wanted to walk and walk and walk. Probably because he was delighted to be able to confirm the truth he had

found himself. He walked on and on in the warm sun.

3

Kirin showed the beginning of a vigorous new tendency.

The Juvenile Association was holding meetings every evening and there were Marxist-Leninist study groups at many schools. The first had been at Yuwen Middle School, then Wenkuang, the Fifth Middle School and the Vocational School; and at the Law School the study group was organised by Chae Gyong. Quite a few students who had been under nationalist influence also joined the study group.

Pak Gwang Sik who had been looking for the meeting place for his study group, chose his own house. His was a large house built around a courtyard, and his father, who had been active in the Independence Army was sick in bed now in the parlour. He could not move around because of his osteomyelitis, so he was not in a position to complain. Having chosen his house he thought it was the best venue for meetings he could ever have. He gave grave warnings to his family. Shaking his huge fist he told his younger brothers that if they told other people anything about the students studying in a group, there would be hell to pay. He also gave a warning to his mother.

"Mother, you know what we are studying, don't you? If you are careless and let it get out, this is what will happen to us," Pak Gwang Sik drew a finger across his throat.

"I'll be as dumb as a rock. Whatever I hear, it will just sink into me; it won't come out again."

"But how about father? You mustn't tell him anything about it. Tell him the students come here to do their homework together. I'll tell him the same...."

"All right, I will."

"You are the kindest person I know...."

"Oh, you rascal..." his mother laughed, wrinkling her face.

These precautions ensured secrecy about what was going on in Pak Gwang Sik's huge imposing main building. Every evening the study group members assembled and debated. They could discuss openly, unlike the study groups of other schools who had to speak in undertones.

One evening Gyong Ju and Paek Sun Hui appeared at Pak Gwang Sik's house. They had been instructed to go and see how the group was run; they had been preparing to form study groups at the Girls' Middle and Girls' Normal Schools. The boys were all astir and received Gyong Ju and Paek Sun Hui.

Pak Gwang Sik ushered the visitors to the best corner of the room and other students made room for them with a general murmur.

"Let's sit down," said Gyong Ju, pulling Paek Sun Hui's arm. They sat down cautiously.

Gyong Ju could not repress her leaping heart. She had been told about the Marxist-Leninist study group being run in Pak Gwang Sik's main living room, but she had never imagined that the group was so lively. They say study groups like this one have been formed in many schools already; so, isn't the whole of Kirin being shaken up? she wondered. How is it possible that there should be such a change overnight? Gyong Ju saw a great image beyond the burning flames enveloping the whole town.

The boy students were saying noisily that study groups should be set up at the Girls' Middle and Girls' Normal. Pak Gwang Sik cautioned the girls against the bespectacled principal of the Girls' Middle. The room was so warm that some students had taken off their coats.

This evening the group had a discussion "On the Present Stage of the Korean Revolution".

The atmosphere was serious. Some students put on airs and stuttered, probably because two girls were there. Gyong Ju and Paek Sun Hui devoured everything they heard. Quite a few words were new to Paek Sun Hui. The speakers often used such words as "surplus value", "starvation wages", "slump" and so on, most of which sounded very strange to Paek Sun Hui's ears.

Paek Sun Hui decided to study hard from now on. She thought it was as well that her brother had left for Seoul. She felt as if she had complete freedom to study Marxism-Leninism at home.

Listening to the debate, Pak Gwang Sik jotted down a lot in his notebook. He moved a fountain pen in his hand and once in a while he expressed his support to some arguments. He was very generous in his estimation of the arguments. But when the theory was wrong he shook his head and clicked his tongue. By the time the debate was over, he had filled several pages of his notebook. He picked it up and rose to make the last speech

with a fiery passion, slapping the palm of his hand with his notebook.

The meeting closed rather late. Gyong Ju and Paek Sun Hui walked past the side street into the main thoroughfare. They were silent.

"What are you thinking about?" asked the sensitive Paek Sun Hui, staring at Gyong Ju.

"I just feel reassured."

"So do I."

"Everything seems to be quiet in Kirin, doesn't it? The streets are quiet and so is the night sky...but there is a very strong undertow. Our movement is only just in bud, but it is already very serious. How tremendous it will be when it is fully grown!"

"It will be like a vast forest that will cover the whole world."

"Not a forest. It will be a force like a storm. The storm that swept Tsarist Russia must have grown from a bud like this."

Gyong Ju said this, and Paek Sun Hui's heart was full.

They visited O Bo Bae to discuss the problems of forming study groups at the Girls' Middle and Girls' Normal.

O Bo Bae's family had left Korea and moved here last winter; and she was living at her father's elder brother's. Bo Bae's uncle was a stubborn old scholar of Chinese classics who had a national conscience. The girls were so afraid of this old man that they sneaked round to the back building where O Bo Bae's family lived.

When they went into the room, Bo Bae was sitting by the lamp and knitting. Her younger brothers were asleep, their legs on top of each other's. Bo Bae's mother was also sleeping like a log, her thick-knuckled hands stretched out. One of the young boys was sleeping with his leg on the neck of the youngest. Their hard life seemed to have exhausted the whole of the family.

"Bo Bae, let us go out and talk a while," whispered Paek Sun Hui. Bo Bae smiled and nodded. Gyong Ju put the boy's legs straight, and smoothed out the quilts which had been thrown aside and gestured to her friends to be quiet.

Taking Bo Bae with them, Gyong Ju and Paek Sun Hui reached the lawn on their way to Peishan Park.

"Oh, how bright the moon is. Isn't it better for you to do your knitting in the moonlight, instead of at that dark lamp...." As Paek Sun Hui said this, Bo Bae smiled again without a word.

"Bo Bae, we went to the Wenkuang Middle study group to-night. We intended to take you along, but we thought it was too late, and could not come out of the town gate," Gyong Ju said. Bo Bae was silent, tearing bits of dry grass.

"How are you preparing things at your school? How many girls have you pulled in so far?"

Still, Bo Bae was silent. A little later she raised her pale face, which shone in the moonlight and opened her lips.

"I am afraid I cannot study in Kirin."

"Why?"

"Father said that he had got me enrolled at the Normal School with an effort, but we won't be able to live on here. So, he said he would go to a village to farm, and he has given up his job at the wharf and gone away. Maybe to find a tract of land."

"Well, then, let your father go and farm in a village. Ask your uncle for money for your schooling. That will do." Gyong Ju said, shaking O Bo Bae's knee.

"My uncle, too, is hard pressed; he can't pay my school expenses. My family is already heavily in debt to him...."

"There, there, an elder brother can't be indifferent to his younger brother's starving family. There can be no indebtedness between brothers." Paek Sun Hui chimed in.

Bo Bae could not speak, there were tears in her eyes. Both Gyong Ju and Paek Sun Hui held back their tears, recalling what they had seen just now at Bo Bae's room. But Gyong Ju was plucky and profound in thought.

"Now, you may go to the countryside, but we must discuss the task we must do right now. Even if you go, you must continue to study Marxism-Leninism. So you had better study as much as possible while you are here, you see? Who wants to join the study group apart from you?"

"Cho Suk Hui, Han Un Yon and Li Jong Ae in the third year and there are several in the second year." Bo Bae answered Gyong Ju, counting them on her fingers.

"Which is the cleverest of them?"

"There is little to choose between them."

"Have you got a bunch of blockheads at your school?"

This drew a burst of laughter. Gyong Ju laughed herself, so did Paek Sun Hui. The embarrassed Bo Bae laughed, turning away her face, still picking bits of grass. For a good while the three girls discussed forming a Marxist-Leninist study group at the

Girls' Normal. Finally they agreed to include the students of the Girls' Normal in the Girls' Middle School study group, instead of forming a separate one since the Girls' Normal students were not so dependable. This would have to be raised with Comrade Kum Song through Gyong Ju's brother. They talked on, sitting on the grass until the moon waned.

4

Comrade Kum Song energetically pushed ahead with the campaign to get An Muk released. Every day he sat in the school library writing denunciations and appeals.

One day Glacier came in. Looking over his shoulder at the letter he was writing he said in worried tones.

"Isn't that too violent? I agree with you but I am afraid of this."

Glacier drew a line across his chest, meaning the Police Agency or the Homeland Purification Bureau or the prison.

"Sir, this is not violent; we must act resolutely for justice. As long as we fight for justice there is nothing to fear. You, too, said victory is on the side of justice, didn't you?"

"Yes, yes...."

Glacier laughed good-humouredly. But his divided moustache looked ruffled.

"Don't you feel well, sir?"

"I'm all right. Feel much better since you came here."

"You look rather drawn, sir."

"Hum, I locked myself up to write an article...."

Glacier smiled, smoothing his moustache.

Comrade Kum Song had become very intimate with Glacier. He had visited him in his home and had borrowed books from him. Glacier and his wife had no children, and his house was as quiet as a temple. Glacier was static and quiet in character as if he was asleep in history; this seemed, to some extent, to be the result of his domestic life.

Whenever Comrade Kum Song visited them, the old couple were delighted. Their silent and gloomy life was cheered, and they became unusually lively and did all they could to lavish their affection on Comrade Kum Song. The couple entertained

him with food and fruit and showed him various things they had in the house. Comrade Kum Song saw the large musty library and some fragments from the Old Stone Age found downstreams in the Yellow River and the Tuman-gang River. The couple even urged him to move to their house.

"Look, you had better be careful of that Wang," said Glacier, looking at Comrade Kum Song writing the appeal.

"You mean the gym teacher, sir?"

"Yes, I am sure he is a special agent sent here by the police. The other day when I was angry at the 'Monkey Case' in America, Wang said, 'You believe in Darwin's theory of evolution? I think your views on history are a bit suspicious.' I don't know what he is going to do with me. I was just indignant at the case of a biology teacher. What has it to do with my historical views? Anybody gets indignant at the case of a teacher sentenced to five years' imprisonment just because he had lectured on Darwin's theory of evolution. Was the Coolidge Administration right? That scoundrel.... Oh, there he comes. Put your manuscript away."

Saying this Glacier took a step backward. Indeed, the uncommonly tall Wang Hsi-tung was coming down the passage beyond the glass door. He wore a grey Western suit and a pair of greenish sun-glasses. He noticed Glacier and Comrade Kum Song as he entered the library. Glacier snatched the paper Comrade Kum Song was writing now, together with the other papers, and went over to a chair a little way off. He thought he must not let Wang get the wind of Comrade Kum Song preparing the appeal. So he leafed through the pages of the manuscript one by one with a fierce look so as to prevent Wang from approaching him.

Comrade Kum Song was forced to pretend to be reading a book. In fact, this appeal would not make Wang regard Comrade Kum Song as a Communist. It only clearly distinguished right from wrong with national indignation, condemned Japanese imperialism and criticised the criminal acts of the Chang Tso-lin regime.

"You are in charge of the Juvenile Association these days?" asked Wang, coming up to Comrade Kum Song.

"Yes, sir."

"What kind of banner does the Juvenile Association have?"

"Banner? A juvenile association has no banner."

"But they have got to have a banner. In these days when there are so many ideological trends, even a juvenile associa-

tion must have something that shows what they aspire for, must they not?" Wang Hsi-tung stole a sinister glance at Comrade Kum Song and then watched the face of Glacier seated yonder.

"What banner do you think the juvenile organisation should raise, sir?"

"You needn't ask me about that. Any banner must be hoisted according to the will of the membership."

"If a banner is really necessary, we shall have a red one and flutter it. How do you like the red banner?"

"Ha ha ha. That'll be good. Good."

Wang Hsi-tung grinned, thinking that Comrade Kum Song was joking.

"I like a red banner. Because the colour is good, first of all. If we hoist the banner to look at the colour, we won't be criticised by the Police Agency, will we?"

"Ha ha ha," Wang Hsi-tung laughed again.

Glacier too grinned quietly, checking the manuscript. Then Wang Hsi-tung looked round the bookshelves, whistling. He picked out this or that book before he went away.

"Blackguard!... Do you know why he puts on the sun-glasses? So that we cannot see his eyes goggle. Be careful of him." Glacier said, delivering the manuscript.

"You must be careful, sir."

"Um, but I am no socialist."

Glacier left the library, and Comrade Kum Song went on working at his manuscript.

Meanwhile Comrade Kum Song dynamically led the study groups organised at different schools. By now every school had got its own study group—Yuwen Middle School, the Law School, Girls' Middle School and Girls' Normal in the town, as well as Wenkuang Middle School, the Fifth and First Middle Schools, the Vocational School and the Catholic School on the outskirts. They shot up like bamboo shoots after rain.

Of the many study groups Comrade Kum Song spent the most effort on leading the workers' study group at the engine depot run by Gi Jun. He taught the workers Korean, and explained why the propertyless masses must make revolution and how capitalist society exploited them, and had the workers debate on these problems. The young workers were surprisingly quick in awakening. Every question discussed was linked with their rough lives, so that every word said by Comrade Kum Song touched them deeply, reminding them of their bitter

past.

One evening he visited Gi Jun at his house, and after all the young people were gone, talked with him.

"Comrade Gi Jun, I have one thing to discuss with you."

"What is that?"

"You must form an organisation, while continuing to run the study group."

"What organisation do you mean?" asked Gi Jun, looking at Comrade Kum Song.

Gi Jun collected himself as he noticed a serious expression on his face.

"There is nothing extraordinary about it. If we are to make revolution, we must learn Marxism-Leninism, but we must set up an organisation to do practical revolutionary work. The aim of the organisation is to overthrow Japanese imperialist rule and to build socialist and communist society in Korea in the future. You have good comrades at the engine depot, haven't you? At the repair and maintenance shop and also among the stockers...we must form an organisation to bring in these young men. Since this will be an illegal organisation, we cannot pull in all the young people at once. Do you understand me?"

"I believe I understand," replied Gi Jun, gripping his knee with his huge hand. Li Song Nam sat in a corner of the room and stared from Comrade Kum Song to Gi Jun with his saucer-like eyes. He had got a lighter job and had grown a bit healthier.

"This is a secret organisation. Therefore, you must admit members one by one, and you must choose them with great care."

"Then we must start with the members of our study group, too, mustn't we?"

"Of course, we must. They are the young activists, you know."

"I will arrange it, and not only arrange it but will also carry out any other assignments you give me."

"In order to rid yourselves of your oppression, you must have your own organisation as soon as practicable. Organisation is a weapon that will bring us to victory in the revolution. As I always say, you are people who must be at the forefront of the revolutionary struggle. So you must take greater pride in the revolution than anybody else, and must form a fighting organisation."

Comrade Kum Song had had a far-reaching plan to spread

the organisational network of the DIU he had formed in Huatien, to Kirin and the surrounding villages and to develop the DIU into a mass organisation. The new circumstances he was in now demanded this. The seat of revolution had suddenly expanded and many young revolutionaries flocked around him, anxious to be under his leadership.

To weld these young people into an organised force, Comrade Kum Song had felt it necessary to reorganise the DIU into a mass organisation. This was possible because the members of the DIU trained since the days at Huatien had grown up as a hard core who could handle it. So he thought of changing the name of the DIU into the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. With this plan in mind, he had written a letter to Hwang Hak in Huatien. He asked him to send a few activists to Kirin immediately, while continually expanding the organisation in his area into the villages. He intended to use the young activists to help expand the organisation in this area.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUNRAYS SPREAD

1

There was a football match in the sports ground of the Fifth Middle School, a match between two classes.

Students were standing round and cheering and yelling to support their teams. The ball was going back and forth between the two goals. The players in their sports uniforms ran around, yelling to each other to shoot. The sports teacher, whistle in mouth, ran with the players. Whenever the ball went near a goal, he darted towards it and bent down to watch the ball bouncing about the players' feet. And when the ball hit the net, he raised both arms and loudly blew his whistle.

Sin Dong Ho was the best player. He had been picked by his class to play forward. The moment he caught the ball, he set it rolling and dashed about like a flying tiger. He dribbled the ball instead of passing it. So as soon as Sin Dong Ho caught the ball, two or three players of the opposing team moved in to tackle. But Sin Dong Ho tried to slip through their defences, ignoring shouts from teammates to pass to them. Finally, he lost the ball to the other team. So, though Sin Dong Ho was a good player, he was always criticised by his team. Today, too, Sin Dong Ho behaved in the same vainglorious manner and caused his class to lose.

After sunset the students began to disperse. Sin Dong Ho went over to the lawn by the sports field where he had taken off his uniform, and lay on his back. Then he cooled down, stroking his chest with his fingertips.

"Did you play football again, Sin?" A voice asked, and Sin Dong Ho leapt up to his feet. It was the literature teacher who was on his way home, his walking stick in his hand.

"Yes, sir."

"Football and poem? No, you must write poems. Football has nothing to do with our agonizing souls."

"I write poems, too."

"You must. Well, haven't you finished the *Self-portrait* yet?"

"No, not yet sir...."

"Complete it quickly. As soon as it is finished I will recommend it for print."

The literature teacher walked out of the front gate, leaning on his stick. Sin Dong Ho looked the teacher's back. He felt pity for him God knows why. The words "agonizing souls" had a queer effect on Sin Dong Ho. The literature teacher used to write poems before he came to teach at this school. His poems—dreams, sorrows and exclamations—caused the students to shed tears. Some time ago, during his lecture he recited his poem *Cold Moon* at the teacher's table. While he recited his own memories his body and voice trembled. Tears streamed from his eyes. It was a burning candle. It completely melted the students who shed tears with him. This literature teacher had had a lot of influence on Sin Dong Ho in driving him into a poetic whirl, into the ivory tower. He always praised Sin Dong Ho's talent. Sometimes he even read out Sin's poems at school. Meanwhile, he criticised him for his inclination towards vanity, which his own poetical world cast out. For him, poetry must be based on the aspirations and sorrows of an unhappy nation.

Inspired by the literature teacher's advice to finish his *Self-portrait*, Sin Dong Ho walked away, thinking about the poem. His heart was leaping at the thought that his poem would be printed in a paper or a magazine.

The centre of the town was crowded. People surged up and down the street and the sound of the drivers cracking their whips was heard unceasingly. Threading through the noisy crowd of people he groped to catch poetical inspiration.

When Sin Dong Ho returned home, his sister or Bong Suk's mother was waiting for him, with supper ready.

"Why are you so late?"

"I had something to do at school."

"Go to Youth House after supper. Yong Ju's brother has been waiting for you to go to the students' society meeting with him...."

Sin Dong Ho sat at the table without a word. He did not

know why, but he thought he would have to go to the meeting. Yet, he felt as sad as if he were parting with his own self. Kirin is changing, he thought. The young people and students are now in a great stir and are being pulled into the current. Clearly, there is a truth which the Korean youth will not be able to avoid. Should I turn my back on it? I have so far negated the reality that lacked this truth, but as far as I have seen the truth is shedding its rays in reality, there is no reason for me to turn away my face.

Thus thinking, Sin Dong Ho finished his supper quickly. He picked up a book, pushed it into his trouser pocket and went out. He walked hurriedly towards Youth House. When he arrived, the meeting had already started. A loud voice could be heard from inside.

He stopped and stood still. His heart beat violently. For a few moments he hesitated—try as he might, he could not pluck up the courage to go in.

Students could be seen sitting inside the glass door. If he went in, he would draw the whole audience's attention to himself, and he could hardly bear the idea of this. For a while he listened to the voice ringing out in Youth House. It was Chae Gyong's voice.

"The students' society officials had not felt the weight of their responsibilities till now. What was the object of the students' society? It was for the youth deprived of their country to unite with one mind and one purpose and be absorbed in studies and foster the strength to win back their country, regardless of isms or doctrines. But we have forgotten this aim and failed to develop the students' society. As one of the officials of the society I must admit that I, too, shirked my responsibilities."

"Just a moment. Let me say a few words."

Chae Gyong's speech was interrupted by a student who must have got up on his feet.

"Comrade Chae Gyong is taking the blame on himself, but have any other officials of the students' society shown any willingness to do their bit for the society? Let me take Comrade Song Chun Bo for example, though he has changed a bit now. He is in charge of propaganda, but what sort of propaganda has he done? He ran around and shouted. What did he do apart from clenching his fists and slandering socialism? Comrade Chae Gyong just said, the object of the society

is to unite us regardless of our views and doctrines, but did Comrade Song Chun Bo work along those lines?"

Sin Dong Ho could hear the student slap the palm of his hand with a rolled book. He took a few steps towards the building, taking advantage of this. But his legs trembled, and he stopped again. Why should I walk in when the meeting is at its height? Sin Dong Ho thought. I have turned my back on reality so far, why should I show myself up before these people in this shameful manner? He turned away dejected. Step by step he walked down the hill from Youth House.

He did not want to go home. He would like to go to the bank of the Sungari for fresh air and lose himself in meditation. He walked along Honan Street. It was still busy with pedestrians. Bicycles and carriages went past endlessly, so did rickshaws and tricycles. These small, in some cases heavily patched, wheels ran night and day. Sin Dong Ho wondered if man could not live without these tenacious implements.

He walked past Honan Street and was going to turn into the road to the West Gate, but there was a row of fully-armed MPs on either side stopping the traffic. They were lining up with their backs to the street, their bristling bayonets glimmering in the moonlight. Each time pedestrians turned into the street they yelled to them to turn back. Maybe the Commandant was coming back to his Headquarters. They had done this each time Chang Tso-hsiang returned from a visit. Many people were standing at both ends of the street and there was a lot of hubbub. A crowd of Chinese in long gowns flocked round a street lamp, talking noisily. There was also a group of Koreans nearby. All necks were craned towards Hsinkai Gate and there were many grumbles and curses. The armed MPs were stalking up and down the now deserted street. Sin Dong Ho went over to a lamp post across the street. He did not mix with the crowd but stood under a tree alone.

"Isn't it Comrade Sin?" a woman's voice asked, and Sin Dong Ho looked round. Paek Sun Hui came over to him, smiling.

"I haven't seen you for a long time, Comrade Sun Hui."

"Well, where are you going?"

"Yes, I...er...." Sin Dong Ho prevaricated. He did not want to tell her where he was going.

"Do you still write poems?"

"Sometimes. But they are not much good...."

"Why not much good? Everybody says you are very talented."

Sin Dong Ho could not reply, his face was turning red. She was asking him about his poems, and they were a big headache to him. He wished to God Paek Sun Hui knew nothing about the poems.

"Why didn't you go to the students' society meeting this evening, Comrade Sun Hui?"

"I couldn't, because I had an urgent business on the outskirts of the town."

In actual fact, Paek Sun Hui was on her way to Gi Jun's outside the town gate on Comrade Kum Song's instructions.

"And you could not attend the meeting because you write poems, Comrade Sin? Ho ho ho...."

Sin Dong Ho blushed again. He felt that this girl, too, kept him at a distance and mocked at him, and he was anxious to get out of this awkward situation quickly. Fortunately, a yellow car came rolling into the street and turned towards Headquarters. As soon as it had gone the traffic began to move, and crowds of people flowed into the street like harnessed water bursting through the sluice gates. Sin Dong Ho left Paek Sun Hui in a hurry and joined in the wave of people.

2

At the plenary meeting of the students' society officials were strongly criticised. Chang Tae Ho was criticised most, and he sat bending down his heavily perspiring bronze face.

Comrade Kum Song was elected President of the students' society amid thunderous applause. He had acquired another position from which to sow new seeds, train a reliable core, guide all the organisations along the road to truth and draw them into the orbit of revolution. So it should be possible to unite the masses around an illegal communist organisation. This was his intended method for unifying the masses in one body.

Comrade Kum Song changed the name of the students' society from the Ryogil Students Society to the Ryugil Society of Korean Students and worked out the new steps this society should take.

The evening after the plenary meeting Comrade Kum Song visited Paek Rak Jin, who had sent for him to discuss something.

Paek Rak Jin was sitting at his desk and writing. As Comrade Kum Song came into the room, he put down his writing brush and asked: "Are you working hard these days?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you all right at your lodgings—any troubles?"

"None, sir."

"Tell me if you do have any. I'm ready to help as much as I can."

"Thank you, sir."

Paek Rak Jin put a cigarette into his ivory cigarette holder to hold between his lips. He looked a trifle brighter because he had succeeded in persuading the leaders of the three groups to go ahead with their merger conference.

"I was told last night that you are now in charge of the students' society. I was happy because you are the right man in the right place. But I have one thing to ask you."

"What is that, sir?"

"You, too, have got mixed up with Choe Gon and his company and engage in the socialist movement?"

"Why should I get mixed up with those people?"

"But they say you are involved in the socialist movement."

"Ha ha ha. Is that why you said you had something to discuss with me, sir?"

"We must not leave the students' society in the hands of those fellows, must we? If you joined in with them, what would the students' society turn into? Are you sure the society would not become a body that negates the nation and instigates subversive activities? Choe Gon and his followers say socialism knows no borders, and there is neither mine nor thine, so everything gets destroyed. The Japs are destroying everything in our country, though it has five thousand years of history. And are they going to follow in their wake?" Paek Rak Jin said this in a higher pitched voice, his face flushed with excitement.

"Sir, Choe Gon's is not a real socialism."

"But they boast of being better versed in Marxism than anyone else. Honestly, when your father talked about socialism, I never saw it as their kind of socialism. Your father said that socialist society is a society where there are neither poor nor rich, that everybody is well-off and there is no exploitation or op-

pression. Of course I, too, approve of such a society. But when I heard the claims made by Choe Gon and his ilk who are said to be so well versed in Marxism, I shrank back."

Comrade Kum Song laughed aloud.

"Sir, it appears that you have misunderstood socialism because of Choe Gon and his followers. You have to understand socialism correctly. Why should socialism negate a nation? Socialism is aimed at benefiting every nation. How can one achieve socialism by negating one's own nation? The Russian nation is building a socialist society. Are they denying their nation? That there is neither mine nor thine means that the wealth of the whole nation is owned by all the people, instead of being owned by certain individuals. Only then will it be possible to build a society such as my father described, a society where there is no difference between rich and poor, a society without exploitation or oppression where everybody lives free and equal. We want to build such a society; so why should we destroy things? When we make more, create more, all of us twenty million Koreans will be able to live in comfort, will not we?"

"Well, a socialism like that I won't oppose. You have told me about Russia. I would be happy if a great man such as Lenin should appear in Korea, too, and eliminate the difference of rich and poor and build a new world so that our whole nation can live well. But Choe Gon or Wol Pa set the nation at naught, so how can they build a society where our nation can live well?"

"You are right, sir. But you should know that the Japanese imperialists fear socialism most of all and that they are busy in doing malicious propaganda against it. They are deadly enemies to socialism, because it will eradicate exploitation and oppression and bring power to workers and peasants—they will seize power—because it will overthrow the Japs, and free the Korean people. So misunderstanding the socialist view you might well be taking an attitude that will help the outrageous policies of the Japanese imperialist aggressors. Demands to destroy anything at random, such as are made by Choe Gon and his kind, have nothing to do with socialism; that is anarchy or sheer barbarism. It is socialists who are truly concerned for the destiny of the country and the people and strive for the eternal prosperity of their country for all posterity."

Paek Rak Jin seemed to have come down a bit and his face was a trifle reddish as he sat there puffing smoke.

"Socialism is the true road we must follow. And if we are to build socialism, we must first throw out the Japs. Then, after independence we must build a society without classes or discrimination and make the whole of the people equally well-off. The socialist aim is to build this paradise in our country. Is that not good, sir? Do you think it is bad for the youth and students to take this road?"

"It cannot be a bad idea. So you have no connections with those people?"

"No, sir."

"Now I feel reassured. Anyway I hope you will guide the students' society properly."

Paek Rak Jin's face brightened up. Obviously feeling relieved, he crossed his legs, and puffed out smoke.

After a while Comrade Kum Song got up and went out. As he walked down from the hall, Paek Sun Hui ran up to him from the earthen porch of the main room and whispered so that her father would not hear.

"Please come to the backyard. I want to tell you one thing."

At this moment her mother opened the kitchen door and called to Comrade Kum Song.

"Look, my boy, why don't you stay to supper?"

"I would love to."

Comrade Kum Song followed Paek Sun Hui to the backyard. The setting sun was throwing its shafts on the backyard; the many flowers planted in pots were resplendent in the sun.

Paek Sun Hui invited him to sit on a stool. Apparently she had been preparing supper with her mother. She had an apron over her black skirt and her jacket sleeves were rolled up.

"Erh...can't you educate my father?" asked Paek Sun Hui as soon as Comrade Kum Song was seated on the stool. Her look was strained as if something serious had happened.

"Educate? What do you mean?"

"Well, when I came home from the group's meeting last night, father asked me if I was learning socialism."

"And what was your reply?"

"I was at a loss for words. But right away I answered I was learning not socialism but a new thought."

"And what did your father say?"

"He asked me not to go out again at night. He roared out that if I went out again he would break my legs. Isn't there any

way out? He will only give in when he is taught a lesson."

"Lesson? What do you mean by that?"

"When I was 12, I teased my father to buy me a rubber ball and a tennis racquet. 'What do you need them for, you hussy?' he scolded. My brother scolded me, too. So I got mad and I wrapped up all the old books, a writing brush stand and an inkstone case on his desk and put them into the bottom of my mother's chest of drawers. And I pretended I didn't know where they were. There was a big fuss in the house. The whole family searched every corner of the house. My father made a round of visits at his friends to ask them if they had picked up anything from his desk. My father and brother argued about whether they should report the theft to the Police Agency. Father insisted on making the report to recover the books at least, but my brother objected, saying that they didn't cost much so they needed not report it. Every day they argued. Finally my father gave up the search and sighed like a mother who has lost a child. He said: 'This is very strange, indeed. If a thief broke into the house why would he have stolen such trifles?' He was very upset and sat and chainsmoked...."

"Then what happened?"

"I took out the things about ten days later. He heaved a huge sigh of relief; he said: 'you really are spiteful. I will go out and buy you the ball and the racquet.' Soon he went out and returned with the things I wanted."

Comrade Kum Song laughed boisterously.

"My father needs such a lesson."

"Well, you could do that as a child, but you shouldn't do it now."

"What shall I do now? I must attend the group meeting at all costs. On your advice, we decided to have a joint Girls' Middle and Girls' Normal group from tomorrow evening."

Paek Sun Hui quickly wiped the beads of perspiration on her forehead with her apron. Then, with her stretched fingers, she brushed back a few wisps of hair and patted her head.

"Study with your friends. But in dealing with your father you must not resort to childish means. If you are a Marxist-Leninist student, you must educate your family and make them understand you. You must not use that kind of method again. Anyhow, we shall try to make him understand you by the by. I shall help you. I had a talk with him this evening, and I found out that your father is not opposed to socialism as such; he simply misunder-

stood it because of the behaviour of those pseudo-Marxists. It seems that he approves of real socialism; you must know this and must understand what your father says. Don't stay away from the study group."

"I won't. We decided to meet at Bun's."

"All right. You must not offend grown-ups while doing useful work. Don't be too rash, but lead them step by step. Let me repeat that a revolutionary must first convert his own family. So, Comrade Sun Hui, you, too, must lead your father and mother along the revolutionary road and strive to bring your brother, now in Seoul, into the revolutionary fold. That may not be an easy task, but if a revolutionary cannot lead his family along the revolutionary road, whom can he lead?"

"But I have not enough knowledge yet."

"Don't underestimate yourself; you must work along revolutionary lines even while you educate yourself."

Paek Sun Hui listened attentively, her head hanging. The setting sun had lost some of its glory and the shadow of the wall had covered half the flowerpots. The girl's mood changed and she got up in high spirits and explained the flowers to him.

3

The campaign for the release of An Muk and others gained momentum. The spark kindled at Kirin spread far and wide. All the newspapers were making a lot of noise, all popular organisations and student circles had declared that it was criminal to arrest people for being engaged in the Korean independence movement and even intrigue to get them handed over to the Japs. Letters of protests had been addressed from many places to the Army Headquarters at Kirin and even to the central government of Chang Tso-lin.

"Don't be cheated by Japanese imperialist tricks!"

"They arrested Korean independence fighters and are intending to hand them over to the Japanese. That is collaboration. Bring to light its dark inside! Stop these unlawful acts immediately! Release the Korean independence fighters!"

As the situation developed this way, the nationalists and all the rest of people in Kirin were boiling with excitement.

"He is a marvellous man, anyway. Isn't it surprising that he used such a method as to arouse so tremendous a force to hit at Japanese imperialism?"

"Yes. But he is trying to save the man although he criticises his ideas. How far-seeing he is!"

People talked a lot in praise of Comrade Kum Song. The nationalists who had been attending the merger conference read the newspapers every day and banged their knees with pleasure at the favourable turn in the situation. Pastor Li Son Yop was overjoyed, praising Comrade Kum Song whenever he opened his mouth.

Meanwhile, Kunihiko, who had been entrenched in Kirin, had tried every possible way to get hold of the prisoners. But as the students rose up in protest and wide sections of the public followed suit, the Army Headquarters in Kirin had come to their senses and suddenly changed their attitude towards Kunihiko. Moreover, the Commandant Chang Tso-hsiang was infuriated because the prisoners did not seem to be the dangerous socialists Kunihiko and his provost marshal had alleged. So he ordered the Police Agency to speed up the interrogations and find out what kind of people the prisoners were.

As his adventure seemed to be fizzling out, Kunihiko attempted to take over the prisoners through the good offices of the Japanese consul in Kirin.

"Since this case involves two countries, you, as consul, must act now. The Chinese side is reluctant to settle this apparently because the special emissary of the Government-General in Korea has charge of the matter. And I, the special emissary, am being ignored. I was mistaken at the beginning. You should have acted from the start to preserve our dignity."

But the Japanese consul in Kirin flatly rejected Kunihiko's request. He was already unhappy about interference from the "Government-General in Korea" in this matter.

"Don't you know the administrative structure under which a consulate functions? I am a consul and I receive my instructions from the Foreign Office. On the question of dealing with and arresting Koreans, in particular, the Government-General in Korea and the Foreign Office reached an agreement on who should have the authority. The Government-General in Korea must not meddle in this affair."

The consul in Kirin was as short as Kunihiko and had a short neck. With his high cheeks quivering, he glared disdainfully at

Kunihiko.

"What are you talking about? What is the good of being so particular about the agreement on arresting members of the Korean independence movement? And what about the agreement? Do you mean the Government-General in Korea has no right to clamp down on this? If you are so concerned about this agreement, why have you left the Korean independence movement workers in Kirin alone? Why have you been unable to take any action against the merger of the three groups? With your howdah about this agreement you are even preventing us from taking any measures—whose side are you on?" Kunihiko banged the desk with his fist so that the ceramic vase on the desk rattled. The consul grabbed it with flashing eyes. It had been excavated on the outskirts of Kirin and the consul was a keen collector. It nearly fell off the desk, and the consul was purple with anger.

"How violent you are! Where do you think you are banging on the desk? Do you think you are in your own living room? And what right have you to ask me which side I am on?"

"You stand there your arms folded and let Korean independence advocates breed freely. Why do you remain an onlooker in the case? Do you think you are immune from the laws of the Empire? This can no longer be regarded as a mere negligence in your official duty; you allow our enemies to breed, that is sedition; Of that you certainly are guilty."

"How dare you speak like that. Me guilty of sedition? It is you who are seditious. Seditious because you have broken into premises belonging to the state and indulge in outrageous slander."

The consul, too, banged the desk, holding the neck of the ceramic vase with his other hand so that it would not fall.

The two men argued furiously. It almost seemed as if they would come to blows.

Kunihiko failed to make the consul act. Back in his hotel he went through the newspapers on the desk, his fury still smouldering. The protests from different sections of the public had become stronger. The press reported that student meetings had been held in Harbin and even in Tientsin today. The meetings were covered in detail. A letter of protest adopted at a student meeting in Harbin was reported in full. The letter denounced the Chang Tso-lin regime, but one could read between the lines that the spear was really directed against Japan. Some passages

openly cursed Japan.

While Kunihiro sat there, absorbed in these newspaper reports, there was a knock at the door and a junior prosecutor entered. He conveyed an intelligence that Comrade Kum Song had been to the engine depot.

"Engine depot?"

Pushing aside the newspapers, Kunihiro stared in the junior prosecutor's face.

"He appeared in the engine depot and met the workers. So it is not merely a student movement."

"I think I understand."

When the junior prosecutor was gone, Kunihiro leaned his back against the armchair and lit a *Shikishima* cigarette. His knitted brow looked very sinister. Since his arrival in Kirin, he had had all Comrade Kum Song's activities closely watched. He had found out that Comrade Kum Song had organised the communist DIU in Huatien, that he had delivered a sensational speech at Chiangnan Park on the very day An Muk had been arrested and that later, he had spread the sparks that had set the public aflame. So Kunihiro had sent out his spies in all directions and was even now collecting intelligence on him.

"He appeared at the engine depot and met the workers? So the spread of communism is not confined to the students," he thought as he sat there belching smoke.

Some minutes later he jumped to his feet and for a while he paced agitatedly up and down the room, his hands behind his back, stretching and clenching his fingers. Cunning and shrewd, Kunihiro's eyes glinted like daggers.

The next day he revisited the Japanese consul in Kirin. He was a stubborn and terrible man. Once he had made up his mind, nothing was impossible for him. This time he succeeded in coaxing the consul, God knows how. The consul made a fuss, called up the Army Headquarters and the Police Agency, the receiver held to his tiny ear. That night Kunihiro played checkers with the consul at his house.

In spite of the consul's activities, however, the Army Headquarters did not hand over An Muk and others. They did not even give a clearcut answer.

"Those old leathernecks! Let's wait and see if they dare turn down our demand."

Kunihiro was enraged. He thought of going to Peking and using the good offices of the Japanese minister there to raise

the matter with Chang Tso-lin himself. But he only got no further than Mukden, for on his arrival there he received a telegram from the police bureau director of the "Government-General in Korea". Kunihiko trembled as he read the telegram, which instructed him to come straight back. At last the clamour roused by every section of the public had forced the "Government-General's" police bureau to call off its bloodhounds.

So his venture had miscarried. Kunihiko walked up and down the room panting with anger. This was his first failure. He had succeeded in far more complicated and important cases, when they had been assigned to him. But this time he had rushed to China, had failed and was being kicked out.

Kunihiko mumbled that because of Comrade Kum Song the "Government-General in Korea" had received a slap in the face. He instructed the prosecutors under his command to prepare the carriages. Then he went up to the miniature altar at the hotel, where the "Goddess of Amaterasu Omikami" was enshrined and knelt down. Joining the flats of his hands and closing his eyes he prayed. "Because of the lack of devotion, I have failed to repay the Imperial favour." His close-cropped hair twitched. Whenever he was at the altar, he had the habit of recalling his great grandfather who had performed exploits in the "Restoration of Imperial Rule" under the command of Saigo Takamori. So his whole body shook with pious devotion and there were tears in his eyes.

4

Having smashed the "Government-General in Korea's" strategy with a bold organised struggle, Comrade Kum Song left confidently for Liberation Village with Kang Chang Su who had been staying at Kwon Sim's.

Some while ago he had heard some unpleasant news about Liberation Village. This village had been peaceful and harmonious and the village school had been run satisfactorily. But Wol Pa and Choe Gon and their company had visited it frequently until the village was thrown into confusion and the school closed down. It was said later that the school had had two teachers, but they had bustled about under the influence of Wol Pa and

Choe Gon, and one of them had been arrested by the Japanese and the other dismissed by the nationalist headmaster.

So Comrade Kum Song had intended to send Kang Chang Su to Liberation Village, in order to get the school reopened first and then guide this village which was overrun by sectarians back into the fold.

Accompanied by Kang Chang Su, Comrade Kum Song walked across the vast plain.

Kang Chang Su talked volubly about how Kwon Sim had rewritten his article. After Comrade Kum Song pointed out the defects of his article, Kwon Sim had kept the manuscript in his file for about a month and been absorbed in reading books, and only recently had he started rewriting the article. He said Kwon Sim had repeatedly said Comrade Kum Song was right. As Kwon Sim skipped his meals and did not sleep, Kang Chang Su advised him to take care of his health. But Kwon Sim shouted him down and walked round and round the room. Sometimes he stalked up and down the yard all night.

Kang Chang Su said that he felt pity for Kwon Sim who was worn out and moth-eaten. Kang Chang Su commented that at a time when the Korean revolution was trying to get out of the mire, it was little use sitting in the study and wrestling, pale-faced, with a pen.

Anyhow Kang Chang Su was a skilled talker. He was said to have studied at a Japanese university, but had no such an air at all; he gave the impression of a veteran worker. His cheekbones were high and his hands were as large and rough as workers'. This was probably because he had worked as a manual labourer. The night he visited him, Comrade Kum Song and he had exchanged a few words and Comrade Kum Song thought he had made an acquaintance who would be a good friend. That night, seated by his side, Kang Chang Su said in a tearful voice.

"Please guide me. I have already decided to dedicate my life to the revolution. When I was roaming about in Japan I used to weep because I could not get a job. And now, if there is no revolution, I shall weep as I did then."

Kang Chang Su's unsophisticated words moved Comrade Kum Song greatly. Kang Chang Su visited his lodgings every night. And he devoured books without rest. Comrade Kum Song discussed various theoretical problems with him, for Kang had a solid knowledge of theory.

This is a good friend, Comrade Kum Song thought, with a sound outlook on the world. That was why Comrade Kum Song had picked out Kang Chang Su for Liberation Village where he intended to launch on the development of rural areas.

"Comrade Kang, as I told you yesterday, if we are to push ahead with the Korean revolution, our forces have to mend the disastrous damage those factionalists have done. How serious is the situation in Liberation Village? They have confused the village and succeeded in getting the school closed down—and meanwhile they sit there night and day, bragging that they are working for the socialist revolution. We must crush them and build up our strength. What is most important for us now is to go among the masses to unite them and build up their strength."

The weather was warm, and larks were singing in the sky. Countless yellow flowers were blossoming by the roadside and their scent was wafted on the breeze.

"Revolution cannot be made by a few people however well they know its truth. They must go among the masses, awaken them to the truth of the revolution, awake the masses to rise up as one. The real masters of revolution are the masses. Revolution is for a better destiny for the exploited and oppressed. So, who should be the masters of the revolution? The people must arise and be the masters of revolution, for only then they can win. As far as the conditions in Korea are concerned, it is very important to unite the peasants, for 80 per cent of Koreans are peasants. If they unite, then nearly all Koreans are united. What great forces they are! It is true that to arm the peasants with revolutionary consciousness and to unite them is no easy task. But we must do it, come what may. The peasants and the workers are the most heavily oppressed. Look at that over there."

Comrade Kum Song raised his hand and pointed to the fields beyond the hill, where peasants were busy weeding. The crops had not grown yet, and it was impossible to see yet whether the fields were sown with sorghum or millet. The peasants were hoeing the dusty ridges in the fields, breaking up the clumps of earth with their hoes. Some of them wore conical bamboo hats.

"Peasants lead hard lives. And in autumn, when they have worked hard all year they are robbed of most of what they have grown. They dream of filling their rice jar and living in comfort for a few months. But this dirty society soon dispels even

such little dreams. It takes away their crops and leaves them without any food at all. That is the life of the Korean peasants. They are horribly exploited, and they do not understand why. But the factionalists, instead of wakening them to what is going on, just throw them into confusion, with utterly absurd claims. We must go among the masses, educate them to revolutionary awareness so that they unite and become strong."

"I'll remember that. I will work hard to meet your expectations."

Kang Chang Su had listened to Comrade Kum Song, engraving his words on mind.

The plain seemed boundless. Sometimes they walked past a broad expanse of field grown with wormwood bushes. Once in a while a quail fluttered up from among the bushes. Kang Chang Su, spotting the birds moving among the wormwood stalks, would pick up a stone and throw it at them. Though he looked rough, he still had artless simplicity.

Comrade Kum Song and Kang Chang Su arrived at Liberation Village just before noon. He went straight to the school, a building several rooms long. In the big playground some children were kicking a ball.

"Stop a minute. What kind of ball is that?"

Comrade Kum Song stood erect, looking at the ball rolling around at the children's feet. He hurried towards the youngsters and asked them to show him the ball. It was made of straw ropes, not of leather, but so well made that at first glance it looked like leather. It was tough and strong and seemed to weigh several pounds.

"They made a nice ball with straw ropes all right, but they are kicking this heavy thing like a stone as if it was a leather ball. How well they would kick if we gave them a leather ball!" Comrade Kum Song said, feeling the weight of a ball.

"Give us our ball back."

"All right, I will. By the way, why aren't you at your lessons?"

"How can we, when there's no teacher?"

"Where is the headmaster?"

"He is at home. Please give us our ball."

"Well, let me see who is the first to kick it."

Comrade Kum Song tossed the ball with all his might. The ball soared into the air. The children jostled each other to be the first to kick the ball. A small boy jumped up in the air and

headed it off a little way. There were peals of laughter among the children. Comrade Kum Song laughed, so did Kang Chang Su, jerking back his head. Some of the boys wore rough cotton undershirts, some Korean jackets and trousers. None wore Western clothes. A boy rolled up his trousers but they soon came down again, and he trod on the bottoms with his bast-sandals, but he did not worry, and went on kicking the ball. The children were dripping wet with sweat.

Comrade Kum Song looked round the school with Kang Chang Su. The surroundings were untidy; the earthen porch and yard did not seem to have been swept for days. One corner of the yard was littered with straw, probably by the children when they made their ball, and bundles of firewood were piled up in disorder. Maybe these were for the night duty room. The office door was fastened with a huge padlock. They peeped into the office through the glass window. It was neat and tidy. There were a large desk, probably the headmaster's and two smaller teachers' desks. The ceiling and wall were papered and a big map of Korea hung on one wall. A few new lacquered yellow book cases stood against another wall. All of them were locked.

"Koreans live like this wherever they go. They build neat schools to educate their children." Comrade Kum Song said to Kang Chang Su who was standing on tiptoe also looking in.

Comrade Kum Song suddenly recalled his father. His father himself had taught at schools in Mangyongdae and Kangdong, but even after that he had built schools wherever he went and dedicated himself to educating the new generation. In Linchiang, Pataokou and Fusung, he built and ran schools, and worked specially hard in school management. He would get donations to buy desks and chairs, organs and sports equipment. While a teacher at Mangyongdae and Kangdong he had been so poor that he could not buy desks and chairs so he made them himself with saw and plane. The hardest part of running schools was preparing textbooks. His father had worked hard and had written them himself. He took great care to educate the children as patriots and to train them as revolutionary fighters. His enthusiasm was such that he would often sit up all night, writing new textbooks, and they had been used all over the country and became mental food for the younger generation.

Comrade Kum Song could see the face of his father—as he had looked when he played an organ in the classroom of the

Paeksan School—the children had liked learning revolutionary songs from him, so he had often played the organ to teach them to the youngsters. Comrade Kum Song had a vivid memory of his father touching the keys of the organ, his face uplifted. He had such calm and serene eyes and such a deep voice which led the pupils' chorus.

Oh, I wish my father were still alive, Comrade Kum Song thought. How he would have grieved to see this school closed down.

After he had looked round the school, a boy led him to the headmaster's house.

"How do you do, sir?" Comrade Kum Song greeted the headmaster, who was sitting up on his bed. The headmaster replied and asked him where he came from. He was a white-bearded old man with a fierce-looking face, which gave Kang Chang Su an impression of a ferocious tiger.

"We are from Kirin. We wrote to you a few days ago."

"Oh, good gracious! When I received your kind letter, I was thinking I should come and visit you. But there, you got here first. I thank you very much. Do come in, please."

The headmaster suddenly brightened visibly; he took off the towel that was tied round his head and folded up his bedding.

"You must be very ill, sir."

"No, nothing serious. Oh, how I thank you! You are the only person who visits and helps unfortunate Koreans. I cannot say how grateful I am to you for even caring about our difficulties in this remote country school."

"Headmaster, the misfortune of this school is the misfortune of the Korean people. Who should do something about that except us young people? I believe this kind of work must be done by us young folk. We always feel this responsibility keenly."

"You are quite right. Who else would shoulder the misfortunes handed down by the older generation?"

Blinking, the headmaster went on.

"In fact, I suffered many hardships when I served in the Independence Army; and I thought I should stick to this school for the rest of my life to do the little I could for independence. But now that the school is in such a shape I feel worn out. I cannot cope with such difficulties at my age, so I have sat here with folded arms sighing with grief."

"You should not upset yourself like this, sir. The children

who lost their school are gathered outside waiting for the school gate to open. If we don't open the school gate quickly for them, we cannot claim that we are working to reclaim the lost country with Korean spirit."

"You are right. I worked with the same idea as you. But in this case I was powerless. It was those socialists who plunged us into these troubles. Honestly the teachers of our school were all clever men. But as they were affected by socialism, they became lukewarm and light-headed about their school work."

The headmaster described the teachers. One was from Uiju, but he was arrested in his own town when he banged his fists and made a socialist speech. The other was from Chientao. The headmaster dismissed him because he feared that a socialist might bring misfortune to the school.

Comrade Kum Song said that he had intended to bring two teachers with him but he could only find one, Mr. Kang.

"One will be fine. A few of the villagers have been looking for teachers. And you are kind enough to bring us one. I don't know how to thank you. All the villagers will dance for joy at the news."

"Mr. Kang studied in Japan. His home is in Seoul. He left school before he finished and returned to Seoul before he came to Kirin. So I asked him to work here."

"Thank you. I never dreamed that Mr. Kang would come to my school. I hope you will be able to cope with our troubles here."

"It will be no trouble, sir," replied Kang Chang Su, bowing deeply. But he was half-afraid that this tiger-like old man might kick him out, because he, too, was a socialist.

Comrade Kum Song stayed on for a long time, inquiring into the history of the school. According to the headmaster the school had been built by the Independence Army, and most of the teachers under his supervision had been nationalists.

After leaving the headmaster, Comrade Kum Song made a round of the village with Kang Chang Su. He found the peasants living in the same poverty as elsewhere. There wasn't a single house which had stacks of sorghum stalks or bundles of firewood. Almost all the children playing at the roadside were in rags. Whenever he met peasants, he talked to them. He asked them detailed questions: Whose land were they tilling? How much did they harvest last year and how much did they have to pay in kind? Were they short of food? How many in their

family and did they send their children to school? The peasants stared at him wide-eyed, wondering why this young man inquired into their situation in such detail.

In a house on the outskirts of the back village, Comrade Kum Song found an old man weeding his kitchen garden. He had a top knot of white wavy hair which looked like the roots of green onions. He asked the old man if he had no one who could weed for him.

"I have, I do have one. But what can I do? He won't weed even when the cabbage plot is overgrown with weeds like this. He has become so crazy that he makes an old man do this backbreaking work."

"Who do you mean?"

"I have a son like you young men. But the rascal is bragging that socialism will be implemented here and that the land distributed right away, so he is chasing around all over the place every day in the busiest season of the year. I wonder who the bastards are that are egging him on to behave like that; I'm really angry." As the old man talked, the veins stood out on his dried-up neck. He went on to say.

"Do you know how we live in this village now? Everybody is frightened. The villagers were at peace with each other, but now they are divided, and the young fellows threaten anybody with 'blows' and 'strikes'. Their parents are at a loss what to do with them. That's why the school was closed down. Those smart teachers joined hands with them and got the school into its present mess, and now they are gone."

While the old man was grumbling, a tall, thin-necked youth walked into the yard, a book rolled up in his hand.

"What are you making such a fuss about weeding the garden like that, Pa? Get up and stop work."

The old man worked his hoe, pretending not to hear. Maybe he was getting ready to give his son hell. The son walked into the garden. As he saw Comrade Kum Song and Kang Chang Su, he bowed with a broad grin.

"Are you from Kirin? I heard about you just now in the front village."

"Yes. We made a round of the front village and then came here. We found your father weeding, and we were worried about him because he is too old for it."

As Comrade Kum Song said this, the young man grinned again.

"My father is very stubborn. I keep telling him to stop, but he takes no notice. Come on, Pa, stop it, please."

He went to his father, and half lifted him up, holding him under the arms.

"Can't you let go of me? What the hell do you think you are doing, leaving the garden to get so overgrown? When... when are you going to weed the sorghum field in Crow Valley? It has not been weeded at all yet. You think you can reap the grain from the damned field?"

"I will weed it, Pa."

"When will you weed it? You rascal, the house will be ruined while you keep running around."

"Oh, Pa. You think our house could be ruined any more? We are already ruined."

"Just let go of me!"

The old man resisted for some time, so as not to be pulled away from the garden. The *Principles of Socialism* fell on the ground. Comrade Kum Song picked it up and joined the son in urging the old man to get up and go into the house. Then the old man gave up and let his son take him through the yard. He went into the room.

"Oh, he made me sweat," grumbled the young man, coming out again, wiping his forehead with his jacket sleeve. He had a long face like a snake gourd and dark eyes. Thanks to these eyes his unusual height did not make him look awkward.

"Are you reading the *Principles of Socialism*?"

"I can and must read this sort of thing. The proletarian revolution is near at hand...." The son replied squaring his shoulders. Comrade Kum Song laughed loudly. So did Kang Chang Su, his face reddening. No doubt, this youth had gone quite crazy and was chasing around all over the place.

"Your name is Chong Gum Sok?" asked Comrade Kum Song, looking at the name written on the cover.

"Yes. Chong Gum Sok."

"How many friends of yours read these books in this village?"

"Fifteen or so. They are the elite."

"What do you mean by the elite?"

"It means the vanguard of the proletarian revolution."

"When will the proletarian revolution come?"

"We understand it will be very soon. Oh, yes, you are from Kirin, so you must know Mr. Wol Pa and Mr. Choe Gon."

Chong Gum Sok said this very cautiously, looking around.

"Well, did they tell you they are going to make the revolution?"

"Yes. As soon as the proletariat seize hegemony and the order is given, the bourgeoisie will be overthrown just like that. Then, they say, the workers will own the factories and the peasants the land. How good it is! My father is nagging me now, but, when he gets a tract of land he'll slap his knee, and say, 'You're right, the revolution is indeed very good.'"

Comrade Kum Song gave another burst of laughter, so did Kang Chang Su.

Chong Gum Sok did not weed the kitchen garden. Instead, he chopped firewood for the night, stripped to the waist. This tall youth had broad shoulders and every time he brought down his axe, the muscles of his back jerked.

Comrade Kum Song thought about Chong Gum Sok's behaviour.

"Wol Pa and Choe Gon have done a lot of harm. They have got these simple-hearted young people in a complete muddle. How absurd the things they are saying! You must nudge all these youths onto the right road, not just label them as under the bad influence of Wol Pa and Choe Gon." Comrade Kum Song said, as they came out of Chong Gum Sok's house.

"You are right. They are so poor that once they believed that they would soon be given land, they became completely unsettled."

"Yes. We cannot blame them for their desire to own land. Young people like him will be good fighters once they come to their senses."

That night Comrade Kum Song stayed at the headmaster's house with Kang Chang Su.

Late into the night, the headmaster told them how he had crossed the Manchurian wilderness when he was in the independence movement and about the hardships he had suffered. He had first served in Hong Bom Do's Hunters' Union, and when it was dissolved, he had been connected with various organisations on the independence movement, and had directed his main efforts to educating the masses. He said that he had not too many years to live now, and he would stick firmly to the school until the end of his days; and he asked them for help.

Early next morning, Kang Chang Su got up before the window turned pale; he was in the habit of early rising because

he used to deliver newspapers in Japan. He looked at Comrade Kum Song's bed, but found that he was not in. So he went out, though it was still quite dark.

Pacing up and down the yard, Kang Chang Su breathed in the fresh morning air. Out in the countryside, he felt as light and fresh as if he had just had a good bath, and he had an urge to run as he used to when he still delivered the papers. He was looking for Comrade Kum Song when he saw him coming down the road from the direction of the mill house.

"Up already, Comrade Kang?"

"Why, you were up before me."

"I went across to see the field there because the villagers say they till it."

"You have been to the field already?"

"The field is just across the bridge. Well, let us go to the school and clean up the playground and start building a flower garden near by. How happy the children will be to see a flower garden in that lonely wind-swept yard. And the flower garden is educationally very useful."

"Oh, that's a good idea. My trouble is that I never seem to think of things like that just off the cuff."

"Ha ha. There is nothing special about this idea. But you must always think about what you are doing and why, still that's not very difficult, is it?"

"I agree."

Kang Chang Su went into the front yard to look for implements. He went into the dark cowshed and came out with a pick and a rake.

"Just a moment. I need a broom and a hoe as well," he mumbled, standing the pick and rake up against the wall on the earthen porch, and he looked around. Presently he found two hoes and a broom in the trench under the chimney.

"Will these do?"

"I think so." Comrade Kum Song went off carrying the implements with Kang.

The eastern sky was crimson in the morning glow. It was glorious; it looked as if there was a huge fire on the far side of the earth.

"This is a lovely dawn. But dawn is always good." Kang Chang Su commented.

"You must not only regard it as good. You must know the meaning of dawn. How many lessons dawn teaches us!"

The sky burned more and more gloriously. The red lips of the sun would be rising at any moment.

Comrade Kum Song took off his coat in the front yard and Kang Chang Su followed suit.

Comrade Kum Song started tidying around the school. He carried the bundles of firewood a little way off and gathered armfuls of straws and took them away to the edge of the field. Kang Chang Su picked up the big logs on the earthen porch and ran off to the backyard. They must have been brought in to cut into planks.

After tidying around the school, Comrade Kum Song swept the earthen porch and the playground with Kang Chang Su. Then he started to make a flower garden in a corner of the playground. He started digging the ground up with the pick and Kang Chang Su worked with the rake. The rake was not much use because the earth had been trodden hard. After a while Kang Chang Su pulled at a large stake on the edge of the playground.

"What is that stake for? It's driven so deep. I don't think cattle were tied here?"

"Let's pull it out together."

Comrade Kum Song, too, rolled up his sleeves and grabbed the stake.

"Heave-ho, heave-ho!" Kang Chang Su yelled. Comrade Kum Song joined him and his face became red with effort. Kang Chang Su's, too, flushed crimson. He had very small nostrils and he panted heavily.

"Let's take a rest...." Kang Chang Su was the first to give in.

"Why, do you want to rest before you reach the limit?"

"Ah, I feel done in. Is pulling out stakes also revolution?"

"You must do so many things if you are to make revolution." Comrade Kum Song said, smiling, and wiping away his sweat.

After a short rest Comrade Kum Song took hold of the stake again. Kang Chang Su, too, buckled down to it.

"Heave-ho, heave-ho! Harder, harder, oh!" The stake came out as suddenly as if it was a long radish. Thrown on the ground it looked almost two arm-spans long. It was swollen with damp, and it would have been impossible for one man to pull it out. They started to dig again.

While they were busy at their work, the headmaster came running, looking for his lost guests.

"My, what a change! The school grounds are as clean as whistle. But what are you digging for?"

"We are going to make a flower bed, because the grounds look too dreary," said Comrade Kum Song. The headmaster was very pleased, and said that was the difference between the young and the old.

"Now it looks as if sunrays are spreading over this village. Well, let's stop work, and go in and have some breakfast."

"You go first, sir. We'll dig a little longer."

"You can come and dig after breakfast."

"We can have breakfast later. Now we've started, we'll get it laid out before we stop."

"Oh, I'm so grateful to you. I'll be back right away. This morning I feel like kneeling down and prostrating myself to you, I really do," the old man said and hurried off.

Soon after he went, children came rushing in.

"Why are you digging, sir?"

"I want to plant flowers," replied Comrade Kum Song.

"Did you get permission from the headmaster, sir?"

"Of course. We are your new teachers."

"Are you, sir? Then is the school going to open again?"

"Of course, it is. Now the new teachers have come."

"Is that really true? You're not telling us a fib, are you?"

"A fib? Grown-ups don't tell fibs."

"That man looks like a labourer; is he a teacher, too, sir?" one of the children asked, pointing to Kang Chang Su who was digging a little way off.

"Yes, yes. He is your real teacher." Comrade Kum Song smiled, wiping away the sweat. The children raised shouts of joy; they hugged each other and jumped about. One of them spotted another group of children running out of the village, and yelled. "Boys, the school is opening again."

"Is it really? So the new teacher has really come?"

"These fellows say they are our teachers."

"Hey, you mustn't call your teachers 'these fellows'." A tall youngster rebuked the little boy, poking his side. This raised another laugh.

Comrade Kum Song told the children to find flowering plants and water. There were cries of excitement as they scattered and ran to the village. One boy stayed behind; he took a hoe from Kang Chang Su and started digging vigorously. This little boy seemed to be more skilled than Kang Chang Su.

As the news that they were reopening the school sped round, large crowds of children came with plants to the school, in their bare hands or in enamel pots. They had picked garden balsam, zinnias, portulaca and several other flowers. Some children were using a sack to carry flowers with soil round the roots, so that they would not wither. Another group of youngsters brought water. Other pairs of children used poles to carry water, a bucket on each pole and one child at each end. Some children brought water in tiny jars and well-buckets. Some fell and spilled their water. The well was quite a distance from the school grounds and the children worked like ants, making a lot of noise.

The water was spread over the upturned soil, and the clumps of earth crumbled as they sucked up the water.

Kang Chang Su took off his shoes and built a bank. So did Comrade Kum Song. In some places there was too much water and the mud curled up through their toes.

"No more water here! Oh, my goodness...." Comrade Kum Song returned to the world of children, walking about barefoot and receiving the vessels and sprinkling the water.

"Now, just a bit of water in this corner, and we're done. Hurry up...." Comrade Kum Song encouraged the children. Pairs of children with the poles raced to the well, their buckets rattling. They fell down and laughed merrily.

"Now, let's start planting. How about putting portulaca here in front, and the shorter garden balsam next with the zinnias and hollyhocks behind?" Comrade Kum Song asked the children.

"So they are going to stand in rows just like we do: shorties to the front and the lampposts at the back...ha ha ha."

As one of the children made this comment, all the rest burst out laughing, clapping their hands. Comrade Kum Song planted the flowers row by row.

"These flowers are small now, but when they grow up they will bloom beautifully."

"Are they the most beautiful?"

"Oh yes, well, give me the next...."

The children handed Comrade Kum Song one plant after another. He kept planting them, packing down the soil.

"What shall I plant in this row?"

"Garden balsam."

"Pass the garden balsams over, then. Let's plant them."

Kang Chang Su began to plant the flowers now.

The flower-planting was at its height when a horse-driven

carriage was seen rattling down the road beside the school grounds.

"Why, isn't it Comrade President?" A voice came out of the carriage, which stopped by the flower garden. Wol Pa and Choe Gon got out.

"How come you are here?"

"We are on our way back from east Manchuria."

"I thought you were in Kirin. When did you leave for east Manchuria? You are travelling all over the country."

"Ha ha ha. This is the socialist movement, you know. You cannot work if you stay in one place. And what are you doing out here, Comrade President?" Wol Pa asked, coming closer to the flower garden.

"We are planting flowers here."

"Oh, flowers...you are romantic youths, indeed...but ours is not an age in which one can live in such an idyll."

"That's right. That's why we are planting flowers. You cannot grow flowers in the sky, can you? They must strike their roots in the ground."

Wol Pa did not answer because he could not catch what Comrade Kum Song was getting at.

"Well, did anything happen in Kirin?" asked Choe Gon.

"No."

"By the way, Mr. An Muk hasn't been released yet?"

"Not yet."

"But why did you come all the way to this place, Comrade President?" Wol Pa asked him.

"Today is Sunday, and we came to see the countryside."

"That's good. One should see many things while one is young. Now, the Korean revolution seems to have got into the right orbit. A friend of ours who visited the Communist International has come to Kirin and he sent a telegram to us in Chientao. I think he has brought good news with him. I think I'll have to go to Seoul now."

"You are very busy: going to Seoul, to Chientao, to the Russian Maritime Province. I wish you would grow wings." Comrade Kum Song burst out laughing.

Wol Pa and Choe Gon also laughed. But their face reddened, probably because they sensed the criticism behind his words.

The two parted with Comrade Kum Song. It seemed that they had been driving all night. They both looked very worn.

Wol Pa looked more so. He wore dirty Western clothes and a cap. He was more haggard than when Comrade Kum Song first met him.

As Wol Pa and Choe Gon got back into the carriage the two horses snorted and started off at a sharp trot. And Wol Pa urged the driver to whip the beasts harder. With a worn bag under his arm, he moved his whole body as impatiently as if he wished he had wings and could fly.

At this moment in Seoul the M-L group and the Tuesday group to which Wol Pa belonged were squabbling over power. So he thought if the Communist International had recognized his group as a de jure party, he could dash to Seoul and chop down the M-L group and throw them overboard. Therefore, as soon as he had received the telegram, he had hurriedly wound up the short training course for the local organizers held under the willows on the bank of the Hailan River, and raced off like a hurricane towards Kirin.

That day, the school, which had been closed up for a long time, was reopened. Comrade Kum Song and Kang Chang Su taught the children. So the headmaster had nothing to do but sit in the office and chain-smoke, the wrinkles on his face now smoother. He would like to make this proud event known to the villagers. But, before he could send out messengers, the news had spread all round the village.

The village folk were overjoyed.

"You know, they are unusual young men, aren't they. They say they dug a flower garden on the school grounds and reopened the school. How come such wonderful men are here in our village?"

"They were from Seoul, they say."

"What are you talking about. From Kirin, not from Seoul...."

"If they are from Kirin, they might be the children of some Independence Army leaders."

"Could be."

The whole villagers flocked to the school, talking noisily. Some of them came running in from the field where they had been weeding. The school was crowded with young men, housewives and old people. There was a general murmur among them as they watched the new teachers teach the children. Crowds of people looked in through doors and windows to the classrooms where Comrade Kum Song and Kang Chang Su were teaching,

getting up on their toes to see.

"What map is this?" asked Comrade Kum Song, indicating a map drawn on the blackboard.

"A map of Korea, sir." The pupils answered in unison.

"Where is Mt. Paekdu-san?"

"It is in Hamgyong Province."

"Where is Mt. Hanna?"

There was a lot of noise as some said it was in Kyongsang Province, and others in Cholla Province. The grown-ups who were watching them from outside told them where the mountain was, but the children's voices drowned them out.

"Don't you know? Mt. Hanna is on the Cheju Island on the southern tip of Korea. Cheju Island...have you understood?"

"Yes, sir."

"May I ask a question, sir?" asked a black-bearded peasant sticking his head in through the window.

The children laughed.

"My son says the Korean alphabet was invented in the Li dynasty but I think it was made during the Koryo. Which is right, sir?"

"Your son is right."

The children laughed again, and clapped their hands. The people making a noise outside laughed, too, and slapped their thighs. They admired the teacher, saying that he was handsome and spoke well.

Anyhow, the whole village seemed to be celebrating. The boisterous village folks were happy and excited and the children were as elated as if they were going to fly into the sky.

After lesson Comrade Kum Song went into the office to bid farewell to the headmaster before leaving Liberation Village.

The headmaster was very excited as he looked out at the crowds of villagers in the yard.

"Please come in and sit down. Mr. Kang is mixing and joking with the villagers just like a child. I have been smiling at him through the window. Oh, how pleasant it is! Today is the happiest day of my whole life. All the village folk assembled in the yard must feel the same."

"Sir, the sun is setting, so I must leave for Kirin."

"Leave here? Is it possible? I was wishing to God both you young men would stay and teach at this school. It is wishful thinking of course.... But you can't leave tonight. If you must leave, do at least stay here overnight."

"Sir, I myself attend school, so I can't do that. And I must

be back in Kirin tonight to do some work."

"What a pity. I'm so sorry to hear it. If you have reasons, then I have no right to hamper your important business."

"From now on, I will come here often, sir."

"Please do. And help us in our work at the school. Frankly, when I first received your letter, and even when I met you yesterday, though I was pleased, I was really afraid you might be socialists. But having seen what you did today, I know my fears were groundless. Now, I would like to place my complete trust in you and let you undertake the full for the school."

"Thank you, sir. Mr. Kang is going to work here at this school; and I, too, will do all I can for the school. Sir, but...." Comrade Kum Song stopped a moment and stared at the headmaster's face.

"Yes?"

"Leaving Mr. Kang behind at this school, I have been thinking of discussing an important matter, and I am going to tell you what it is."

"Go ahead," said the headmaster taking up a cigarette package.

"Sir, we are Communists. You may be surprised to hear it, but I must tell you this, because I think it right and proper to make this clear before I go."

"What on earth do you mean? You young men are Communists?"

"Yes, sir. We are Communists, fighting for the independence of Korea."

"Then...the...the...like the Wol Pa...."

"They have nothing to do with us. You have a mistaken notion of communism, sir. You will find out gradually that communism is the soundest doctrine, the only line that can lead the unfortunate Korean people towards happiness."

"Um...."

In spite of Comrade Kum Song's earnest tone, the headmaster changed colour and shook his chin.

"I know you can't understand us this minute. You should know that among those who call themselves Communists, there are those who, to satisfy their personal political ambitions, are doing a lot of harm to the revolution, distorting the true nature of communism and confusing the young people. Without realising all that, it will be hard to understand what communism is really about."

The headmaster was silent. He looked very thoughtful.

"To tell the truth, there are two reasons why Mr. Kang is going to work as a teacher at your school: one is to educate the youngsters, the other to unite the villagers in harmony and rouse them in the fight to throw out the Japs. I hope that you, sir, will be helping Mr. Kang in this. For I am sure, sir, that you will approve of this work."

The headmaster remained silent. Then, after a few moments, he opened his lips heavily.

"I feel what you are saying sounds like a dream."

"I understand you, of course; I know what you mean. But, because we come here, certain that what we are doing is right, we do not hesitate to reveal that we are Communists, and ask you for help."

The headmaster rose to his feet and restlessly walked up and down the room. Comrade Kum Song again asked him to give as much help as he could to Kang Chang Su, before he said good-bye and left the room.

The headmaster kept pacing up and down the room, breathing heavily and after a while, he threw his heavy body down in his chair. He felt as if he had been hit on the back of his head.

Can such a fine young man be a Communist, he wondered. It beats me. He is so beautifully behaved, such a generous person, and it seems to me that he is working for a cause, and has such high principles. Could he be really a Communist?

The headmaster stood up again and went to the window, his legs trembling. He wanted to get another look at the young man.

The yard was still animated with the villagers. They surrounded the young man and talked smilingly with him. All of them seemed to be at ease now, saying whatever they pleased. The younger villagers were particularly voluble and excited. After a while the villagers accompanied the youth and walked past the flower garden into the high road.

"Um...I don't think I could distinguish man from doctrine...." murmured the headmaster, relaxed and breathed out heavily.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE WHARF

1

Accompanied by villagers, Comrade Kum Song went to the bank of the Sungari to board a boat bound for Kirin.

He was followed by the headmaster who was feeling more light-hearted than he had been in the office just before. The villagers talked among themselves, praising Comrade Kum Song to the skies for being so kind and bringing them a teacher to reopen their school.

A boat was being loaded up on the riverside. A long string of people under heavy loads crossed the footboard onto the boat. A stocky fellow on board was yelling at them to hurry up. Most of the labourers seemed to be peasants. They were not so skilful at crossing the footboard as the stevedores at the wharf in Kirin. The oxen that had pulled the carts up were mooing. One rubbed his horns on an empty cart. There were a few horses, too, which must have brought the loads in carriages.

For a while Comrade Kum Song was looking at the busy scene when a young man came up to him and bowed.

"Who are you?"

"Don't you know me? I met you once at Uncle Choe Song Gun's...."

"Oh, you are Comrade Chun Taek. Is your boat loading here?"

"Yes, it is. We arrived here this morning. I knew you were here, because a little while ago, a young man from Liberation Village came to us and asked us to let you, Comrade President, use our boat on your way back."

Chun Taek took off his cap and mopped his face for many moments. Then he took Comrade Kum Song's hand and proposed to go on board ship.

"What's the use of going on board while they are loading? I will go on board when the boat leaves."

"No. The loading is almost done. Let's go and take a look at our boat, too."

Chun Taek pulled Comrade Kum Song's hand with his huge one towards the footboard. Comrade Kum Song had to shake hands with the villagers.

"I'm so very sorry. Please do come here often."

"Thank you. I will. I hope you villagers will help Mr. Kang."

"But we won't be much help to Mr. Kang. We are only grateful to you for bringing a good teacher here."

The people of Liberation Village could hardly let go of Comrade Kum Song's hands. The headmaster, having shaken hands with him, wiped the tears off his eyes with the string of his *turumagi*. Young people asked him to make a speech to them next time he came. They had known that Comrade Kum Song had made a speech criticising An Muk at Chiangnan Park.

"Comrade Kang, now, hold the plough of revolution firm here. The headmaster will not object our work. We must set right this place overrun by Choe Gon and Wol Pa, spread our seeds and build up our strength. I hope you will fight with confidence." Comrade Kum Song said this at the gangway and then followed Chun Taek onto the boat. Chun Taek ushered him past the congested cargo hatch towards the stern.

The paint on the hull was peeling and the edges of asbestos sheeting showed here and there; pitch was smeared between the deck boards; all of which showed that she was an old boat. But everything on deck was neat and tidy, ready to sail: coils of rope, emergency pumps with shining handles and the wooden buckets hung over the stern of the boat. Everything spoke of meticulous care.

"Well, what do you do on this boat, Comrade Chun Taek?"

"I'm the boatswain. The captain and I take turns at the helm."

From the helm at the bridge you could see the mast and the end of the bow on a line. The anchor chain still stretched and shone in the sun as the boat swayed. The loading seemed to be completed—they were covering the cargo hatch with a tarpaulin. Chun Taek flung open the door of the bridge house and led Comrade Kum Song to the captain's cabin.

"Let me take a look at the place you people live."

"Oh no. You mustn't go in, it's dirty." Chun Taek objected.

"That's all right. Let me have a look."

"I'm afraid it's hardly a place for you to go," said Chun Taek, scratching the back of his head.

"Let's go and see, anyhow. I'd like to see your quarters however bad they are."

"Then come this way." Reluctantly Chun Taek led the way towards the stern.

"Here. We must go down this way...."

Chun Taek looked very embarrassed, pointing to a hatch in the corner of the stern.

"Let's go down," Comrade Kum Song said.

Chun Taek climbed down the ladder first, followed by Comrade Kum Song. It was dark and gloomy. There was no fresh air, and a sour, oppressive smell assailed their nostrils. As they reached the hold, Comrade Kum Song saw a large bluish furred barrel and a pile of firewood. The stern at the bottom was apparently used as a galley. In a dark corner chopping boards and bowls were piled up; there was a sooty aluminum pot and a crowd of flies flew up from the wooden lid. It hurt him to look at the scene.

Chun Taek threw open a narrow door, which led to the cabin below. At that moment the engine started up. The whole boat shook violently.

The cabin looked like a dump; the yellow shafts of the sun filtering through the frosted glass of the porthole showed pieces of junk. The walls and ceiling were black with soot. There was a mat on the floor, the centre of which was scorched—obviously by a stove used in the winter. And all the edges of the mat were torn off as if by rats. Oil-stained clothes and small bundles were hung on the walls or thrown negligently on the floor. There were traces of bedbugs and fleas everywhere. Because of the vibration from the engine room, the miserable scene trembled as if writhing. The waves must have begun to rise, for the whole ship swayed and jolted. Something rattled in the galley and then hit the floor with a crash.

"What the hell was that?" Chun Taek darted out, clicking his tongue.

For a good while Comrade Kum Song looked round him. On the shelf on the wall were rolled up tattered quilts and there were several dirty wooden pillows scattered on the floor. Some bundles were piled up on the shelf as well—one at the bottom

was very large and tied up with a black string. A topless straw hat hung on the shelf. There must be about as many boatmen as the wooden pillows, and Comrade Kum Song wondered how they could all manage to lie down and sleep in this very narrow cabin. He could picture the sleeping boatmen putting their legs on top of each other, tossing, turning over their huge sweat-soaked bodies and breathing heavily with fatigue. There were a few books without covers beside the pillows. Among them he could only discern two books—the *Tale of Rose and Red Lotus* and *Mr. Sa's Southern Expedition*. A large wooden ashtray was burnt black at the base.

He was also curious about the boatmen's clothes and took down some of them to take a look. All the clothes were soaked in sweat. Some were threadbare at the back, others at the neck. He pulled them with his hands and they tore. You could hardly wear them. A cotton-padded coat was patched in more than ten places, inside and out; the outside was patched with pieces of white cloth, but the inside was carelessly mended with a variety of colours. It had a large inside pocket, from which a yellowish notebook fell; A pencil with a rubber on one end was stuck between the leaves.

Comrade Kum Song picked it up and was going to put it back, when he happened to see an open page. On it was scribed the amount of the monthly pay. And a detailed account of the money was made—food, cigarettes, a pair of socks, debts to Kim Song Duk, etc. But "Mother at home" had no figure, except a couple of dots marked with the pencil.

Comrade Kum Song could feel his throat contracting. He added up the figures; they came to more than his pay. The owner of the notebook could not send any money to his mother, and only marked in dots in hopes. These figures had probably been written down before payday, not after the money was spent.

Comrade Kum Song closed the notebook to find the name of the owner on the cover. It was Chang Chun Taek.

"Um...this is Comrade Chun Taek's." Comrade Kum Song said to himself and sank in thought. This tall, strong fellow looks careless and rough, but he is so thoughtful and tender at heart!

Presently Chun Taek came back. He led Comrade Kum Song into the engine room busy preparing for voyage, and then back up on deck.

Comrade Kum Song went over to the foredeck where the evening breeze was blowing and stood watching the waves of

the great river, which meandered leisurely from one end of the continent to the other. The river made him feel as if something great was budding in his mind, that would echo far and wide. At the same time, he felt another heavy burden on his shoulders.

I have a task to tackle here, too, he thought. On the waves of the Sungari people are downtrodden, awaiting the revolution. The sun's rays must penetrate here, too.

Chun Taek was preparing to leave at the pilothouse. He sounded the siren with a leaping heart. The siren had always sounded plaintive. Whenever the boat left a wharf, his heart was enwrapped in a mist of grief, that was deepened by the siren. But this evening the siren had a different sound. It seemed to be coming from his beating heart.

In fact, while visiting Choe Jin Guk's, Chun Taek had become aware of Comrade Kum Song's personality, and had been enthralled: Comrade Kum Song had organized the Juvenile Association; had kindled the flames of revolution among the workers at the engine depot; and his fiery speech had put An Muk to shame on his arrival at Kirin (this was what he had understood); and the youth and students in the town of Kirin had begun to rally around him.

Chun Taek was excited at the thought that this revolutionary was now on his boat.

The boat got into midstream and as the paddle wheels turned powerfully, waves hit the bows. The boat sailed upstream cutting through the waves. As the sharp bows tore ahead through the surging waves, the water branched off at the tail in many streams that spread out like a fan. The siren kept wailing, echoing through the dark hills. Chun Taek did not feel the boat was sailing up the river; he felt as if something powerful was running fiercely through the harsh world. At the same time, he kept worrying whether the roll would make Comrade Kum Song uncomfortable. He wished he could cut down the sway and the waves smoothly and silently.

"How long have you steered a boat, Comrade Chun Taek?" inquired Comrade Kum Song entering the pilot's house.

"About five years. But I have been on board the boat for more than ten years now. I started work at eleven as an errand boy."

"Whom do you have at home?"

"A mother and a sister."

"It must be difficult for your mother."

Comrade Kum Song was about to ask him if he sent her money, but stopped. He felt too sad to ask the question, he could still see the dots underneath the words "for Mother at home" instead of an amount. Countless rafts floated down past the boat. In the shelters on the rafts lights twinkled like fireflies. Some of the rafts swayed and danced on the boat's wake. From time to time black sails flew past, and night birds fluttered over the sails, cawing. Busy lives covered the river, and Chun Taek's boat flew on and on like a dragon horse through these lives.

"Comrade Chun Taek, you must start to study now," said Comrade Kum Song, laying a hand on his back.

"Study what? The revolution?"

"Yes. You must study, with a clearcut idea of what you should do as member of the working class of our age."

"I thought I should, and wanted to talk to you about it, Comrade President."

Chun Taek's heart leapt. He was very strained. The sounds of engines and waves—all sound seemed to have gone, and only Comrade Kum Song's words were clearly audible and graven on his mind.

Comrade Kum Song explained in detail where Chun Taek and his colleagues should begin. They must first study the Marxist-Leninist teaching, he said. Unless you grasp this truth, you will not understand what contradictions this society has, how to smash the contradictions, how different this society is from the socialist and communist society we are working for. Because the working class must lead the revolution, you must study and know more than anyone else....

"Do you understand what I mean?"

"Of course I understand. I would be satisfied if I was always with you, Comrade President, hearing you talk like this and carrying out assignments that you give me."

"Once we join hands, it is the same as being always together. There is no rule that the revolutionaries should always work together in one place. As I told you before, you seem to have some education, so you yourself must study Marxism hard. I will send you books that you and your comrades must read. You must study yourself first, and lead the comrades on board the boat and on the wharf."

Chun Taek's heart beat more and more wildly. Things went misty before his eyes, though he felt as if a bright sun was

shining.

"Look, you don't spend all your time at Kirin wharf. You load your boat and visit different wharfs, and you must make sure that your friends there study, too. So that at every wharf you visit, dependable workers must be persuaded to study Marxism. Then all the stevedores on the Sungari can arise and make revolution. The more people take part in the revolution, the better. I have heard a great deal about you from Uncle Choe Song Gun. From now you must not regard yourself as a mere boatman, but must have the pride as a revolutionary and become an activist among the stevedores and boatmen."

"I understand. I will do as you advise. I shall begin a new life." Chun Taek replied, exalted.

The brightly lit town of Kirin came in sight. Chun Taek sounded the siren for a long time. It did not wail just once as usual, but several times. He did not feel as if he were steering a mere cargo boat to the wharf. Under the impact of what Comrade Kum Song had said, he felt that a huge mountain of revolution was floating in. The water was cut asunder as the engine boomed still more vigorously.

2

"Hey...turn the bows this way. Bring the stem here at this pier...."

Choe Song Gun, father of Choe Jin Guk, yelled in the dark, cupping his hand round his mouth.

"What's that?" a dark figure in a raincoat under a blue sidelight beside the bridge, called out bending forward and cupping his ear.

"Oh, hell, come over here, I say!" Choe Song Gun shouted back, running limpingly along the pier where wooden boards were torn off here and there.

"Ah...neck of rapids...."

This time the dark form on the boat yelled, pointing his long pole at the bottom of the water. The darkness seemed to drown the voice.

"That greenhorn! No shoal! Where the hell do you think you are! Don't you worry and push your tail right up here."

The engine of the heavily loaded steamship sounded louder. Presently the paddle wheel on either side of the boat turned, churning the water powerfully. The ship slid forward slowly and came alongside the pier.

"Hey...there...." The dark form shouted from the bows, holding the end of the rope.

"All right, throw it," Choe Song Gun shouted back from the end of the pier. The thick rope drew a long curve in the misty night sky and its end dropped on the pier. Choe Song Gun lost no time pulling it. As soon as he had tied the end of the rope on one of the stakes, Chun Taek who had been holding the helm, cut the engine and jumped onto the pier, followed by Comrade Kum Song.

"Oh, you were here, uncle?"

"Uhum. Was it your boat? You have just come from Liberation Village?"

"Yes."

Comrade Kum Song approached and greeted Choe Song Gun.

"Why, who could this be? Where have you been by boat?"

"I visited Liberation Village and met Comrade Chun Taek and came back by boat, sir. Why do you work so late at night with your bad leg?"

"We have to work night and day at the wharf. The owner of the boat has just been here, and was fretting because the unloading must be finished tonight."

"He wants us to unload over 200 tons of sorghum tonight?" interposed Chun Taek angrily.

"He made a fuss, insisting that we must unload the lot. And he said the boat must leave for Nenchiang with Japanese cotton broadcloth...."

"Humph, I'll be damned." Chun Taek spat, glaring towards the office of the water transport bureau.

"How is your leg, uncle?" asked Comrade Kum Song.

"As bad as ever. It's bound to be. There is no way to get this crippled leg cured."

"But how can you carry a load with that leg?"

"I must. There is no other way. I thought I would work as a labourer on the building site, but I didn't get the job." Choe Song Gun heaved a deep sigh.

Comrade Kum Song, too, sighed deeply looking at the black cargo boat loaded with more than 200 tons. He was

shaken at the thought that the old man would have to carry all that load on his stiff leg, though he was not alone on the job. The long whistle of a steam boat sounded well down stream. The stink from the fish monger's shop on the damp night air made this always oppressive grey wharf still greyer. The people must still be working at the electric, carpenters' and repair shops near the wharf, for wisps of smoke could be seen rising leisurely in the dim lights. Boatmen were taking the tarpaulin covers off the load on the cargo ship.

"Hey...Chun Taek...bring her in a bit closer...." One of the boatmen yelled from the bows. Chun Taek jumped onto the boat. The winch was rattling. The wooden-boarded door of the water-transport office kept opening and closing. An overseer from the office was shrieking blasphemies in front of the boatmen's hostel beside the fish monger's shop.

Lights came in the boatmen's quarters which had been as silent as a grave.

There was a hubbub of voices as a group of rich people who had eaten their fill emerged from the Fuchunlou restaurant, one of them the owner of the boat. He held a long cigarette holder between his teeth.

"Careful here, Chun Taek, bring in that boat carefully." The owner shouted, the smell of wine heavy on his breath.

Chun Taek ignored him and turned the helm. The rope was stretched taut and the damp posts creaked on the pier while paddle wheels splashed fiercely.

"Hey, you, I say, be careful..." roared the owner, the cigarette holder trembling in his hand. But Chun Taek did not care, only staring at the turning bows. As soon as the engine stopped, the boat turned again and came alongside the pier and stayed there.

"What a demon!" Choe Song Gun commented aloud in a deliberate effort to make the owner of the boat notice Chun Taek's superb skill, as he put the gangplank across and drove cramp irons in.

The night was well advanced when the dockers came to the wharf, awakened from their weary slumbers and herded out by an overseer. The crescent moon that had risen over Mt. Lungtan quivered in the mist. Now the steam boat that had whistled a while ago came to the next pier. A water bird who had been awakened by the whistle lost its flock and flew off into the boundless wilderness in the dim moonlight.

Bearing a heavy sack of sorghum Choe Song Gun limped down the gangplank. In spite of himself, his eyes were inclined to look down. He chose the edge of the gangplank to get to the pier, carefully avoiding stepping on the cramp irons. But he found a piece of wooden board was missing and it was difficult for him to find a place to step. A hard breath was already following close behind him. He glanced backward to find two men on the gangplank, urging the men before them to move on.

Choe Song Gun grew impatient and stepped over the hole. His stiff leg hurt and he almost fell down crosswise. The job was hard tonight although he had carried only a few sacks.

"What a stevedore he is! Hey, what did you eat, rice or porridge?" shrilled the owner, smoking a cigarette, his foot on the top of the stake at the end of the pier. The overseer who hung around like a stray cat, watching the workers, iron hook in hand, glared at Choe Song Gun. Choe felt cold sweat streaming down his back.

"Oh, hell, if I am driven hard again, I'm finished." Choe Song Gun cursed to himself.

But, though he tried hard, he still staggered because of his bad leg.

"Old Choe, I told you not to work. Why do you come out even at night?" yelled the overseer.

Choe Song Gun was offended and he wanted to retort, but he was too choked up to speak. He climbed up the slope. He still had quite a long way to go to the mow. He could barely manage to move his feet, dragging his stiff leg and sweating.

"Give it to me, uncle."

"Um?" Choe Song Gun twisted his hard-pressed neck to stare at a tall figure who was coming up to him. To his surprise he saw that it was Comrade Kum Song.

"Why, haven't you gone home yet?"

"Just give it to me."

Comrade Kum Song lifted the sack of sorghum to his shoulder with ease.

"Ah, don't do that. This is no job for students. If I let you do this work, I won't send my Jin Guk to school." Choe Song Gun said this, following Comrade Kum Song, sorry for him who was carrying the load in his stead. But Comrade Kum Song did not say a word, and walked on sprightly towards the mow, the heavy burden on his shoulder.

"It must be very hard for you to work with your bad leg. This is because we have no country and live in an unfair society. We young people are much to blame for that."

"Don't say that. Whenever I see students, I feel strong. However backbreaking the job, I don't feel it hard at all these days."

Comrade Kum Song climbed up a soaring mountain of sorghum sacks, laid his sack on the top and turned on his heel. Walking down, he took the piece of hemp cloth thrown over Choe Song Gun's shoulder and put it over his own. Choe Song Gun was touched by what Comrade Kum Song had said and desisted from his attempt to dissuade him from the work.

The mountain of sacks which had soared above the deck had shrunk sharply so that the gangplank had been shifted downwards to the bottom of the cargo hold. The bottom of the gangplank was so far down that it seemed to be in an abyss.

The labourers climbed up the steep gangplank, sacks of sorghum on their shoulders, walking on their toes. A false step could send you rolling fathoms down.

Curses, sighs, weary breaths, faces shining with sweat. And Comrade Kum Song was among the toiling masses. Carrying the heavy sorghum sack on the shoulder, he climbed up cautiously, step by step, at the same time warning the men in front and behind him to be careful. His face, wet with sweat glistened in the light. Choe Song Gun darted to him and asked him to stop working. But he would not; he put down his load on the pile of sacks and joined the workers on their way down into the cargo hold.

"Who is he?"

"They say he is Mr. Kim Hyong Jik's son."

"Why is he here, carrying loads? Looks like a student...."

The workers whispered.

As Comrade Kum Song worked away, Chun Taek too went down to the cargo hold and carried loads up.

"Be careful."

"I'm all right, but Comrade Chun Taek, you should be careful."

"We're experienced at this—we can jump for it."

Watching Comrade Kum Song out of the corner of his eye Chun Taek walked very swiftly. He looked as if he were dancing on the swinging gangplank.

When the work was finished it was nearly dawn. Comrade Kum Song went up the rising from the wharf, supporting Choe Song Gun.

"I am very sorry."

"What are you talking about, uncle? Go home and have a good rest today."

Saying this at the top of the rising, Comrade Kum Song walked towards the dimly whitening street in high spirits.

Back at home, Choe Song Gun sat down on the earthen porch and lit a cigarette. His son and wife had not yet woken up. It was quiet both in and outside the house, and he could hear his son's regular breathing.

Choe Song Gun had a lump in his throat. My wife and son were sleeping comfortably, he thought, while he helped me with my work all night. He climbed up and down the steep gangplank; who but he would sympathize with this Choe Song Gun? He smoked his cigarette, blinking his eyes.

3

One morning, a few days later, Choe Song Gun was visited by a girl from next door who worked as a nurse at the Charity Hospital. The short, bright-eyed girl said her doctor wanted to see him and suggested they went to her hospital together.

"Why, what should I go to your hospital for?"

"But the doctor asked me to bring you at all costs. Maybe he wants to check your leg."

"My leg?! What for? If he wants to make money, he had better treat the rich; because he won't make money however well he treats me. And it's impossible to cure this leg. Look! Can you cure this hardened leg?"

"Ho ho ho. I don't know whether he will cure it or not. He would like to take a look at it."

"What's the use of seeing it?"

"Uncle, stop talking and come along. He asked me to bring you whatever happens."

So Choe Song Gun had to go to the Charity Hospital with the nurse.

As he entered the consultation room, a corpulent bald-headed doctor jumped up to his feet and received Choe Song Gun.

"You are Mr. Choe Song Gun, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am."

"Thank you for coming. Sit down over here, please." Pak Sung Hun, the bald-headed doctor, indicated a chair and then sat down himself. Pressing a handkerchief against his bald forehead, the doctor looked Choe Song Gun over carefully from top to toe.

"Well, when did you hurt your leg?"

"It was broken last year," returned Choe Song Gun, looking at the ivory parts of a stethoscope sticking out of a big pocket in the doctor's white overall.

"The bone was broken, and the knee has stiffened?"

"That's right."

"Stand up and walk."

Choe Song Gun got to his feet and, walked round the consultation room, dragging his stiff leg. Pak Sung Hun closely watched the way the old man walked. Then he told Choe Song Gun to sit down again and roll up his trouser leg. Moving the leg up and down and feeling it, he then tapped the kneecap several times with a rubber hammer.

"Let's go to the next room," said Pak Sung Hun and led his way out of the consultation room. Choe Song Gun had to follow him. He thought the situation was developing strangely. The first thing he thought of was the hospital fee he would have to pay. He did not know why this bald-headed fellow was doing this. He was taken to the dressing room. As soon as they went into the room, a tough-looking doctor of about the same age as Pak Sung Hun came in. He had a huge gauze mask over his mouth. He was followed by a big strong nurse. He tapped the patient's kneecaps for a while with a rubber hammer. Then he exchanged a few words that Choe Song Gun could not understand with Pak Sung Hun. Pak Sung Hun nodded. So, the doctor with the mask put Choe Song Gun's leg on a wooden frame with a handle on it and tied it with a wide belt. He even tied up Choe's arms.

"What are you going to do?" inquired Choe Song Gun, looking from Pak Sung Hun to the other doctor.

"Please keep still," asked Pak Sung Hun, his hands on his back.

Meanwhile, the doctor with the mask injected a needle into Choe Song Gun's knee.

"Ouch!" cried out Choe Song Gun, jerking his tied-up leg.

"This is an anesthetic," explained the doctor with the mask, pulled out the needle and injected it into another spot.

Choe Song Gun shrieked again. He opened his eyes to find an injector as huge as a beer bottle, which was full of liquid. The doctor injected again.

"Does your leg still hurt?" asked Pak Sung Hun, looking over to Choe Song Gun's wry face.

After several shots, Choe Song Gun could feel no pain.

"But what is this all about?"

"Going to cure your leg. Now, you'll just have to endure this for a bit." Saying this, Pak Sung Hun winked at the other doctor and left the room. As soon as Pak Sung Hun was gone, Choe Song Gun felt a terrible pain as if his whole body was being torn apart. He raised tremendous cries. His whole body jerked back. But his legs could not move in the grip of the doctor's iron arms. Even the nurse pressed his chest so firmly that the old man could not stir.

The doctor slowly turned the handle of the wooden frame, which moved up and down the way the pedal of a bicycle did. So the bad leg tied on it bent and stretched like the branch of a tree. As the leg bent, Choe Song Gun felt as if his kneecap was crushed to powder and the bones cracked, and sparks flew up before his eyes.

"My God...help, let go!" Choe Song Gun cried out, tears running down. But neither the doctor nor the nurse in their masks paid any heed to him, they just kept turning the handle of the frame. The eyes sparkling behind the masks showed no sign of human sympathy.

"Let go of me! Help! They are killing me. Oh, please can't you let go?"

"Oh, my, you are making a racket. You are an elderly gentleman, why do you have to be such a baby?" the doctor grumbled.

"Think in my position, man. Oh! Can't you let go? O...." Choe Song Gun burst out, his shouts shaking the whole hospital.

"Why should I put my good leg on it? I must give you a bit of lesson, old man." The doctor chided again.

The pain was so terrible that Choe Song Gun could not catch what the doctor was saying.

Seated in the consultation room, Pak Sung Hun recalled the extraordinary young man who had visited him last night. He said he was student at Yuwen Middle School. He greeted Pak Sung Hun reverently and made a request that moved Pak.

"I well know, sir, that you have such great hatred for the Japs that you came to Kirin to practise medicine, to contribute to the independence movement. I know well also that the independence movement workers here in Kirin owe much to you. But I would like to tell you that if you do want to contribute to the Korean independence movement in some way or other, you should pay your attention first to the miserable working masses who are very downtrodden and exploited. In fact, every Korean who has been deprived of his country is unfortunate. But those who visit you here have some means of livelihood, even in this strange land. It is the workers and peasants who suffer most from the ruin of our nation. They have not only lost their country; they have also been deprived of their land and livelihood; they are kicked about like pebbles at the roadside, ragged and hungry. And yet no one takes care of them. Why are we so firmly determined to regain the country, shedding our blood and dedicating our lives? Is it not because we should save these workers and peasants who make up the overwhelming majority of our population? The rootcause of all their misfortunes lies in the fact that they lost their country, doesn't it? Therefore, though all Koreans have risen up to restore the country, the workers and peasants are fighting most courageously, and our homeland will be liberated only through their efforts. So sir, if you are truly concerned for the country, grieved over the ruined nation and anxious to restore our national rights, please help them and look after them. They have no money; they only shed tears over their dying children, and even if their limbs are rotting, they don't have enough money to buy ointment...."

The student appealed earnestly, looking at him with bright intelligent eyes. He explained the misery of the Korean workers and peasants scattered in and around Kirin. A story was told here about Choe Song Gun who, with a crippled leg, carried heavy loads on his shoulders climbing up and down the precipitous gangplanks and piers at the wharf. The student asked if as a Korean of the same blood, the doctor had no means to help these people. The question had pricked Pak Sung Hun's conscience. Pak Sung Hun had been awake all last night. The

question seemed like a whip for him whose attitude to life was still ambiguous; it sounded like a stern question. Do you really love your country? Pak Sung Hun asked himself:

"Why do I want the country's independence so? Is it not the primary aim of independence to save workers and peasants? But you have not thought of helping them in spite of your medical skill. So do you truly love your country?"

At dawn the doctor was so deeply excited that he felt like shaking both the student's hands vigorously as soon as he met him again. That was why he had told the nurse to bring in Choe Song Gun.

Presently the sturdy doctor came into the consultation room, dripping with sweat.

"What's the result?"

"I carried him into the ward and laid him down."

"Good. We must treat him with particular care and cure him."

Pak Sung Hun lit a cigarette, quite satisfied.

After the deadly torture, Choe Song Gun lay limply on a bed in the ward. He was no longer able to worry even about the hospital fee, nor had he any strength to shower curses on the doctor or the nurse.

He was given another analgesic that night and he slept well, so that he felt a bit better, but the next day the torture was repeated. It was terrible all right, but not quite as intolerable as the day before.

As a result of the two days of torturous exercise the kneecap swelled like the belly of a snake that has swallowed up a frog. But every day the doctor and the nurse bound the patient to the frame and turned the handle.

A week later the leg moved easily without help from the wooden frame. Then the swelling in the kneecap gradually went down. Only then was the patient astonished by the fantastic fact that his leg was cured and that he was free of the danger of being crippled for life.

Ten days later Pak Sung Hun visited him in the ward.

"Do you think you can walk about freely now?" asked Pak Sung Hun, touching the patient's kneecap.

"Why not, doctor? I will never forget this kindness until the end of my days."

"What do you mean by kindness? I just cured your leg on the request of the President of the students' society."

"President of the students' society?"

"Don't you know son of Mr. Kim Hyong Jik?"

Through his daughter who was student of the Girls' Normal, Pak Sung Hun had come to know that the student who had called on him was the son of Kim Hyong Jik for whom he had such profound respect.

"Why, the...he had me taken to hospital?..."

Choe Song Gun sprang up on his bed, and stared at the doctor for quite a few moments. He dropped his head deeply, the tears fell down through his sparse beard.

Why didn't I know this? he exclaimed. When you grow old, must you get this stupid? He was at a loss for words. He had an urge to dart out and call Kim Hyong Jik at the top of his voice which would echo throughout the whole of universe.

"Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Kim Hyong Jik! While alive, you worked so hard to save us miserable fellow countrymen; and now, you have sent your son to us to look after poor workers like me. I thank you, indeed!"

Choe Song Gun said this again and again in his heart and he shed many tears.

CHAPTER VIII

HAPPINESS

1

The summer was far advanced, with blazing sunshine every day. Yellow dust rose up and the branches of the trees lining the streets bent low under the burning sun. Carriages, rickshaws, bicycles and tricycles panted through the dust. The clothes of the drivers and rickshawmen were drenched with sweat. The main streets such as Peita, Liangmihang, Niumahang and Honan were particularly congested. The pavements were crowded as pedestrians went up and down, working their fans. Many of the women carried parasols. The busiest section was between Chichun-li and Tesheng Street. A market opened and the vendors were shouting at their wares. At a corner of Tesheng Street a tall young man was making a vociferous speech, ringing a bell, presumably selling some thing. He was surrounded by a great wall of people. In the corner of the side-street near an office building, there was another big crowd of noisy pedestrians and here, too, there was something for sale. Merchants kept walking past with carrying poles on their shoulders, crying their wares. Their huge baskets were filled with vegetables, melons, and some fruit that looked like wild pears. A boy threaded through the crowd, crying out: "Buy my cigarettes, best cigarettes."

His plaintive cries echoed over the marketplace. The sweat streamed down the boy's dark shoulders.

Life is tough and disturbing. It leaves nobody alone. It drags people out so that the streets overflow, makes them walk, cry and sweat. That is life, not punishment, but it creates a lot of sufferings. When will people be free from such hard ways of living crying desperately in this hellish street?

At noon when the hot sun was beating down, An Muk was released. Li Gap Mu, Sim Hak, Paek Rak Jin, Choe Hwal, Li Son

Yop, Li Gwang Jin and other Independence Army leaders were waiting for him at the prison gate. A number of people came out of the prison with An Muk. Several dozen others had been set free before him, so they were all out now.

An Muk was emaciated, and his beautiful moustache had turned into a yellowish beard covering his lips completely. His neck was thinner and the white shirt he had worn when he was arrested was loose across the chest.

Yet, as he took a Panama hat and fan from Pastor Li Son Yop he was composed and smiling.

Fumbling with the fan, An Muk faltered out: "You have had a great deal of trouble here outside, while I just sat there doing nothing. And now here I am...."

"But you were in the prison," said old Li Gap Mu with an unusually bright face. "You can't compare prison with the outside. We who were outside were in very high spirits, for the public really got going."

Everyone laughed. Despite the heat, the old man wore a ramie *turumagi* and long Korean socks but he did not seem to lose a drop of sweat.

The party walked past the Bureau of Homeland Purification into the main street. Pastor Li Son Yop was in the middle of the group, describing the great fuss the students and the general public had raised.

"Anyhow, he is a young man of tremendous calibre. He used others to tie up the two governments so that they had them set them free."

"Yes, two governments, the Japs and Chang Tso-lin. He really fixed them. He is son of Mr. Kim Hyong Jik's, you know." Old Sim Hak answered Li Son Yop.

Paek Rak Jin walked on, pleased to hear them talk excitedly. He had been most delighted when Comrade Kum Song had started the campaign to free An Muk. Although Paek Rak Jin disagreed with An Muk, yet he was very glad that Comrade Kum Song had organised a campaign to free the nationalists. That alone was enough to show that this young socialist had different methods from Choe Gon and his lot. Choe Gon would have been perfectly happy at any loss to the nationalists, he would never have offered them a helping hand. And the release campaign had been got going by methods that the nationalists would not have thought of in a million years. Paek Rak Jin was nearly moved to tears at the thought that this wonderful student

was none other than Mr. Kim Hyong Jik's son.

The whole party went to Pastor Li Son Yop's house. The two high ceilinged parlours were packed with guests.

Li Son Yop opened a packet of cigarettes and passed them round. Both the front and back doors were open so that a cool breeze blew through the parlour. The rooms were modestly furnished; a bookshelf on one wall packed with both Western and old Korean books. On another wall there was a large roughly framed picture of Jesus Christ, and a still life. On the end wall, over a small desk, there was a photo of the pastor as a young man.

Most people were discussing the merger conference. All three groups had worked hard for the conference and there had been considerable progress. They had discussed merging of the area organisations, the unification of armed forces, a merger of education and finance and so on. Some problems had been hotly debated for days, while on somethings agreement had been reached with little trouble.

"There have been some difficulties, but on the whole we have done well so far. Now that Mr. An Muk is back among us, we should push ahead at high speed."

Li Son Yop said this, as he went round busily offering everyone a fan or a cigarette.

"Indeed," said old Sim Hak, elated. "Let us all get on with this meeting quickly. They won't be quite so rash again. We may have suffered a setback this time, but it turned to our advantage since we beat the hell out of them."

Everybody was talking in high spirits. Old Li Gap Mu looked well satisfied as he listened to the discussions and he still pinned great hopes on An Muk at the forthcoming conference.

An Muk was silent, playing with his fan. There were thin lines now on his forehead, which had been smooth and shiny and there were dark shadows under his greyish eyes. He looked up at the azure sky through the open window and, once in a while, wiped his forehead with a handkerchief held in the other hand.

"Do have a cigarette."

"Yes...." An Muk gave a monosyllabic reply to Paek Rak Jin.

An Muk looked like a man without a soul.

While An Muk had been in prison, he had thought a great deal about the independence movement as a whole, and had

kept thinking about Comrade Kum Song's questions. He was shaken when he remembered how he had been unable to continue with his speech because he had no answers. He shuddered to see the fundamental reason why he had been unable to answer. After all, his policy had been a mass of contradictions overlaid by a resplendent veil. He had great eloquence, but, the foundations, the ideas were very flimsy; indeed the whole castle of his eloquence was crooked. Yes, that was it. A crooked castle without foundations. That, he decided, was why he could not answer those questions. Is it in fact possible to promote industry in Korea with foreign capital? How, when the Japanese control all politics and our economy? What power could be built up through spiritual cultivation? How could you educate and spiritually cultivate Koreans while education is a slave, or is dished out with Japanese bayonets? And how about American history, does it not reek with blood? How can you cover up the fact that American prosperity was achieved over the bodies of dead Indians? We weep because our country has been taken by the Japs, and with the same mouths we praised the Americans who killed off Indians; of course, the young people were indignant about that. For those are the facts, however bitter and disgusting. So how could I answer the questions? Even if I were slapped in the face, I would not have a word to say. Have I really been following the line of non-resistance? I did not advocate non-resistance. However, if I am honest with myself, I cannot refute the charge that that is what I have advocated.

An Muk was bitterly ashamed. For the first time in his life he was forced to regard himself as worthless.

An Muk had thought a lot of Comrade Kum Song while behind the bars. He knew Comrade Kum Song had been very active in the struggle to get him released; that it was he who had stirred up the people.

He is an extraordinary personality, indeed, An Muk thought to himself. He has a mysterious creativity and authority of dropping him into a bottomless abyss and drawing him into his fold at will. An Muk had been really shaken when he found out that this young man was the son of Kim Hyong Jik at Mangyongdae, Pyongyang; it was a terrific shock to him.

Ten years ago An Muk was delivering a speech on the necessity of relying on external forces at a large assembly of Pyongyangites with his great flow of eloquence. At that time

Kim Hyong Jik in a cotton *turumagi* ran up to the platform and dealt with him so severely that he would remember it to the end of his life. This ardent patriot claimed that dependence on external forces was a sure way of destroying their country, and he virtually killed his speech. And the audience had given thunderous applause to Kim Hyong Jik. An Muk was in such a state that he fled the meeting before Kim Hyong Jik had finished his refutation, taking his coat and walking stick with him. His whole body was perspiring terribly.

This was deeply engraved on An Muk's memory. And now this shattering blow from the son. He felt as if a great swell were flowing, breaking against him again and again. The flow of a lofty, dynamic spirit, An Muk thought. A new spirit, the magnificent spirit of Korea is alive here and I must bow before it. What am I now? I am a mossy stone wall, a stone wall exposed to a chilly evening wind; however agonizing it is, I am nothing but this stone wall. I have reached my destination now. My sun is setting, spreading its last rays.

So An Muk had struggled in his anguish while he was in prison. Sometimes he could not even eat. When other independence workers worried about his health, he would heave a huge sigh and mumble: "What should I spare my body for?" Through this mental agony, An Muk had been reduced almost to skin and bone.

Now An Muk was sitting here in the same agony as in prison; nothing the others said got through to him. He only gazed forlornly through the window at the sky and meditated his life alone.

After school Comrade Kum Song took his classmates to the library. He started rearranging books in the library where it was still rather hot. He had been in charge of the school library, too, for a very practical purpose; through the library he intended to influence all the students at Yuwen Middle School towards Marxism-Leninism.

"Comrade Choe Jin Guk, come and pull the covers off these books. And you, Comrade Li, go to the passage and stand guard, in case anybody comes. Are you sure Wang Hsi-tung is out?" Comrade Kum Song inquired, looking around at the students. One of them replied that he was certain Wang had gone home.

"Well, then, let's tear off these covers. They need new

ones.... Just a moment. One of you must go to the janitor. I asked him to make me some paste; I wonder whether he has done it yet."

"I'll go." A lanky student ran out into the passage, while another student went over to the glass windows to stand guard. Comrade Kum Song went to a corner quickly and had all the empty bookshelves removed to the glass windows facing the passage.

"We must shut out the doors. So that they cannot peep in from the passage.... The library is like a marketplace: They look in from outside and make noise inside. I won't run the library that way. Now, lift it up." He put his shoulder into one end of a bookcase that almost reached the ceiling and lifted it up, another student taking the other end. The high shelf swayed and approached the glass windows.

"Now, down...."

Comrade Kum Song's face flushed as he used all his strength to lift it. One of the students on the other side yelled that his foot was caught under the bookcase.

"Heave-ho. Now pull out your foot. That's it. What's the use of making bookcases so heavy. I think the glass fronts are quite unnecessary."

"But they are part of the Wen-Horn's long-term plan."

The students laughed. The Wen-Horn was the clerk who did the school accounts. He had a small wen on his chin, and was nicknamed Wen-Horn. He never stinted money when procuring school equipment. He claimed that school equipment should be top quality because it would be handed down for generations. One day the principal had asked him to get his chair repaired. He did this, but then he gave the chair to another teacher and bought a revolving chair.

"What would you do if you exceeded the budget? Sell your clothes?" The principal asked, wide-eyed.

"I will use money allocated to some other item. That would accord with the long-term plan, would it not?"

The principal was struck dumb and then he laughed. Since then the words "long-term plan" had been a student joke.

While Comrade Kum Song moved the bookshelves and piled up the books, Choe Jin Guk squatted in a corner, ripping off covers. Yesterday Comrade Kum Song had clandestinely bought scores of books at a bookstore. They included *Anti-Dühring*, *Land Question*, *Das Capital*, *Poverty of*

Philosophy, and State and Revolution.

The bill for the books even held the Wen-Horn aghast.

"This also accords with the long-term plan. We must not save money on books." Choe Jin Guk said, in an endeavour to wheedle him into agreement.

"All right, all right."

The Wen-Horn laughed aloud, counting out the money to pay for the books.

So now they were changing the covers.

The lanky student came in with the hot paste.

"The janitor said he would bring it to us, but I took it from him."

"The janitor is all right; He is a friend."

"Is he?" The student made noise, blowing his fingers.

"Hurry up and get those covers off. What the hell is this for?"

Choe Jin Guk threw a piece of wooden board that had been touching his side, wetting his upper lip with the tip of his tongue. He did this whenever he got merry. His lip glistened as if smeared with honey.

"There, take the covers off these to cover those books with."

Comrade Kum Song picked out books and threw them over this side. Among them were *Dream of a Long Grudge*, *Deep Sigh*, and *World Travelogue*. Choe Jin Guk put their covers on the new books. The paste was still hot, so he pasted and pursed his lips to blow on the covers.

"Careful, here comes Wang Hsi-tung."

The student at the window cried out, cupping his mouth.

"What? Wang Hsi-tung? I thought he was gone home. What brought him back?"

All the students who had been working on the books jumped up to their feet, their eyes wide with shock. If they were caught by Wang, that would be terrible.

"No, no. Ha ha ha. It's not Wang, it's the tall English teacher. Yes, that's he. Going into the superintendent's room. He's not coming here. Ha ha ha."

"That fellow has crooked eyes," grumbled Choe Jin Guk. The classmates all laughed.

"What are you fearing down the library for, um?"

Now the guard would be blamed for his crooked eyes. He had watched the English teacher enter the superintendent's

room, and missed the Wen-Horn coming from behind. The Wen-Horn stuck in his chin with the wen through one of the windows not yet shut out, and glared around with worried eyes lest the students should damage any equipment inside.

"Nothing to worry about, sir. We are rearranging the books." Comrade Kum Song stood in his way, throwing out his broad chest. Meanwhile, his hands behind his back were signalling to Choe Jin Guk to hide the torn covers. For if the Wen-Horn spotted those, they would really be in trouble. Not for the Marxist-Leninist literature, but for tearing covers off books that were school property.

"I don't know what you are playing at, you're such a mysterious fellow."

"Oh there's no mystery about me, sir. But please, mind yourself. Come on, boys, let's have that bookcase over here." And as he said it, the students, with a loud heave-ho, put their shoulders into the bookcase.

"Be careful not to damage anything, boys."

"We are not that silly."

"Who knows? If you are careless, you might always break things."

The students laughed uproariously and the Wen-Horn also grinned and went away. After a long while of moving and removing things, the library had been put in order. The glass windows had been shut off by big bookcases, and the library looked cosy and deep. The smaller open bookshelves were on the opposite side and filled with books. The Marxist-Leninist books were arranged in a bookcase in the corner.

"Well, let's go."

Comrade Kum Song came out of the library with his colleagues. He locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

"From now on, I won't let anybody wander around the library. The books will be lent and returned after school through this window.... What do you think? Wouldn't that be a safer system?"

All his classmates agreed. They came out into the school grounds, as happy as if they had set up a huge arsenal in the school. The sweltering heat of day had given way to the cool evening air.

That day something unexpected happened at Comrade Kum Song's lodgings. In the morning, soon after Sin Dong Ho had gone to school, Bong Suk's mother had received a letter and a telegram, both informing her that her parents were moving to Kirin. The letter had been sent before they left and the telegram was from the train saying that they would arrive at Kirin that afternoon. Bong Suk's mother nearly fainted. She had heard that her family were impoverished because their business had failed, but she had never dreamed this would happen. She had not been too worried because though the distillery had been ruined, her father had some rice paddies and other fields, which would enable them to scrape a living. Several times she had nagged at her brother to write home, but had finally given up trying. So she had long forgotten her parents' troubles.

Bong Suk's mother changed clothes with trembling hands. She sat before a tiny mirror and made some attempt to comb her hair. There were more crow's-feet at the corners of her eyes than last year. Why do my bones stand out on the temples like man's? she thought. One sad thought after another crossed her mind. I am already so poor, and now my parents are utterly ruined! How can we manage with them here? What should I do with my old mother and father? Bong Suk's mother wiped the tears with the sleeve.

She first went to Dong Ho's school. Dong Ho came running out of the school gate. The news seemed to have struck him dumb; he leaned against one of the gate posts limply.

"What is this anyway? They may move in, but they should have come and seen how things were here. How can they bring their large family all the way here so suddenly?"

"Let it be. Let's see how things go...." Sin Dong Ho cried angrily. And yet, his eyes too were red, though his sister pretended not to notice; she turned round and sat down on the lawn, fretfully picking blades of grass. For a while both sister and brother were silent. A lone sail could be seen on the Sungari looking very lost. Bong Suk's mother thought that the world was very cruel to her.

"Go home, sister. I'll go to the station from school to meet them."

Bong Suk's mother rose without a word. Sin Dong Ho pitied his sister. In all the time he had lived at his sister's, she had never looked as miserable as today.

"Don't let mother and father see you looking so put out. Who do you think they hope to rely on in Kirin? They would not have come if the beggarly daughter was alone here. They are coming, because they regard you as the mainstay of the house. If your elder brother were alive, he would have been their mainstay, though...."

Sin Dong Ho's brother had died of consumption some two years ago. So, as Bong Suk's mother said, Sin Dong Ho was now the mainstay of the family.

Bong Suk's mother walked hurriedly down the hill from the school. Sin Dong Ho could not move. His feet seemed to be glued to the ground. He had thought of life as something abstract, something that had little to do with him, something that would go on by itself, but now the gloomy form of life seemed to be standing in his way, a dark form, declaring: I have come to you. Now what are you going to do? It's up to you. Dejectedly, Sin Dong Ho dropped his head and went back into the school.

That afternoon Sin Dong Ho and his sister waited at the station in the boiling sun. Before long the train whistled into the station. Both Sin Dong Ho and his sister felt their hearts rattle like the train.

The train drew in and disgrouped so many passengers that it left one wondering if Kirin could hold them all for people just poured out of every carriage.

"There they are, in the third carriage from the end," said Sin Dong Ho as he grabbed hold of his cap and ran. Bong Suk's mother saw her sister-in-law, dressed in white getting out with a clerk from the distillery. They were helping her father to get down, her father wearing a Panama hat. Bong Suk's mother hurried through the crowd, sensed the waves of passengers floating past, barely aware of her feet touching the ground.

"Father," cried Bong Suk's mother taking both his hands.

"Yes, yes," the father nodded his long beard, stroking his daughter's back with his palsied hand, and asked:

"How are you, then?"

"We are all right, father. But what is all this about, and all so sudden?"

"What's wrong with that? When your husband was alive, I always used to say that I'd come and live here...."

Meanwhile, Sin Dong Ho was talking to his white-haired mother, who wept a little as she patted her son's plump cheeks.

"Don't cry, mother."

"All right, I won't. But I'm afraid you just don't know of the misfortune that befell your family or why we have come here to this strange country."

Now the daughter ran up to her mother and embraced her. She had held back her tears in front of her father, but, reminded of her dead husband, she wept openly. Her sister-in-law was a little way away, and even before exchanging greetings with her relations, she covered her face with a handkerchief, weeping for her husband, too, and for their ruined house. Her five-year-old twin daughters hung onto her skirt and stared on seeing their grandmother cry.

"Watch the luggage, girl," warned the close-clipped distillery clerk, who was bringing one lot of luggage after another out of the carriage. But the child was only interested in the crying grown-ups. A little later Sin Dong Ho dashed into the carriage.

"Thank you very much, uncle. Are these ours?"

"They are. And don't thank me... if your father were not behaving like a child, I would never have come all this way."

Sin Dong Ho and the clerk made several trips to bring out all the luggage. Then Sin Dong Ho hugged his twin nieces and lifted them up one in each arm.

"You have had a hard time, eh, In Dong?"

The girl smiled without a word.

"You, too, have a hard time, Son Dong?"

Son Dong, too, smiled without a reply.

"You two smile twin smiles, eh?"

Sin Dong Ho laughed boisterously. Bong Suk's mother came right over and took Son Dong in her arms.

Presently the whole family left the station, each with a load on their back or head. When they came out of the station, Bong Suk's mother hailed two cabs to take them and their luggage, Bong Suk's mother and her mother sitting side by side.

"My dear, how can you live here on this sandy soil?"

"How can I live here? I live as best I may. What are you worrying about so soon?"

"It is true that we were ruined by the Japs. But were it

not for your father's determination we would not have come to this place. Good gracious me, isn't something breaking?"

"Only stones under the wheels."

"The seat is comfortable, but this shakes too much. How much is this going to cost you?"

"Not much, mother."

"But you should be careful with your money. I don't know how far away you live, but was it necessary to go by cab? You should use your own feet, enjoying the landscape, too."

"You are as talkative as when you were young, mother."

Bong Suk's mother smiled, holding her mother's wrinkled hand. At this moment, old Sin Sok Gun, her father, seated in the other carriage, roared out.

"What's that house there? Is that a Jap police station?"

"What's the matter with you, father?"

"Erh, isn't that a Jap police station there?" old Sin Sok Gun yelled again, pointing with his walking stick.

"That's the consulate, father."

"Consulate? But they have the sign of chrysanthemums under the eave. Isn't that a Jap police station?"

"The Japanese consulate. Well, it's something like a police station, anyway."

"So, you mean the Japs are even here? Isn't he a Jap, that one there pacing up and down the yard?"

"What else could he be, there in the Japanese consulate?"

"Um, those blackguards! The barbarians must have so many breeds; everywhere I go, I come across them like this."

Sin Sok Gun shouted, and pursing up his lips, looked across the street.

There were good reasons for Sin Sok Gun's hatred for the Japs. He had owned the distillery, and some tracts of land and had had quite a lot of cash as well. In his town he was regarded as a rich man. But in a few years after the inflow of Japanese capital, this man of property had plunged headlong into bankruptcy.

At that time, Korea's smaller businessmen were ruined because of the inroads made by Japanese capital, foreign commodities and taxes. Old Sin Sok Gun's case was typical. His sales dwindled, while his taxes increased. So, in the first year, he paid his taxes with the money in the Development Bank, and after that he had to sell his land. So he had run through almost his whole fortune. Sin Sok Gun had gritted his teeth and decided

to come to Kirin, and hurriedly sold what was still left to him in the way of distillery equipment and land. He was a determined man, and he would not take his neighbours' advice to stay in his native town and scrape a living out of what remained to him. His hatred for the Japs drove him to leave his home and go to his son and daughter.

Towards evening Comrade Kum Song returned to his lodgings. The house was noisy; there were many visitors from the neighbourhood, too. Old Sin Sok Gun was snoring, having drunk up the bottle of wine his daughter gave him. Men were gathered in the hall, listening to the distillery clerk telling them how his master had failed in business. In another room the women listened to Sin Dong Ho's mother praising her generous daughter-in-law. The mother, who was a good talker kept weaving desultory stories, puffing at a long smoking pipe. The women neighbours were fascinated to hear her.

Presently Sin Dong Ho came into the yard. His face had been burnt dark in the sun in a single day. He came to the front of the hall and stood there with his hands behind him. He did not say a word.

"You're going to have a hard time, eh?" said one of the men sitting in the hall.

"Oh no, we'll manage."

"Ha ha ha. Of course, you will. But a large family like yours will have much hardship on this sandy soil."

Sin Dong Ho did not reply and went to the kitchen door. Soon he went out of the front gate.

Comrade Kum Song followed him out. Sin Dong Ho sat crying on a bundle of firewood.

"What are you crying for?" asked Comrade Kum Song, coming up to him. Sin Dong Ho wiped the tears with a handkerchief.

After some moments Sin Dong Ho said: "I think I'll have to leave Kirin."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"How can I bury my ambitions in this anguish?"

Sin Dong Ho jumped to his feet. Comrade Kum Song watched him a while. Sin Dong Ho was restless.

"Let's go to a quieter place, Comrade Sin."

Comrade Kum Song took his arm, and walked with him along the side-street leading to the rice-cleaning mill. Every now and then Sin Dong Ho heaved a sigh of grief. They walked

past the storehouse of the mill to the stadium.

"Let's sit down here."

Comrade Kum Song sat down first. Sin Dong Ho sat beside him.

"Where do you intend to go, Comrade Sin?"

"Any place. My father and mother, too, would like to see their son a success. They don't want me rot here, do they?"

"Comrade Sin, what do you mean by being a success? As a poet?"

Sin did not answer.

"Do you have any other wish? The other night you resolved to work for the revolution, did you not? Have you forgotten that already? You are not thinking about the reality that now faces you. Don't you feel for the suffering of your country and people, through your own family? Why were your family ruined and driven here? Were it not for Japanese aggression, this tragedy would not have happened. And you, in your misery are simply trying to run away from this tragedy?"

Still Sin Dong Ho was silent.

"Comrade Sin, I have just one question to ask you. Have you never thought that you are a young Korean, one of twenty million Koreans under the heel of the malicious Japanese rulers? Have you ever pondered deeply over this?"

Sin Dong Ho pulled out the handkerchief and wiped the tears.

"I am talking in all seriousness. In spite of my advice you have apparently not given this problem any real consideration. I am talking to you this because I don't think you made your resolve the other night with much thought."

Sin Dong Ho drooped his head lower and lower, wiping the tears.

"The young Koreans have no right to back out of the revolutionary movement. We must understand that we were born to make a revolution. I don't blame you for writing poetry. How good it would be if you wrote poetry that were based on life, that carried a revolutionary message! We need such poems as rouse the oppressed classes and encourage the revolutionary forces. The songs the fighters sing when they fight and die in action, the songs they sing as they attack the enemy—these songs will inspire us all and be, like guns and bayonets, a force that helps them mow the enemy down. Just think of this: the inveterate enemy shoot at us, overrun our land, our homes and fortune,

take away our livelihood, rob us of all we have, starve and destroy us while you shrink into yourself instead of fighting? Speak out, Comrade Sin."

Sin Dong Ho could not hold back his tears.

3

The next day Comrade Kum Song moved his lodgings. Bong Suk's mother bustled about, looking for a house and helping him move his belongings, repeatedly expressing her regrets for making Comrade Kum Song move out of her house.

Late in the evening Comrade Kum Song returned to his new lodgings.

"Oh, you are back now? Do come in. I tried to tidy up the room, but it's still in poor shape." The mistress said, rubbing the floor with a rag.

"Grandma, I am afraid I'll be a lot of trouble to you."

"No trouble at all. Look, young man."

The old woman stopped rubbing the floor and looked up at Comrade Kum Song.

"Yes?"

"Your father spent two nights in this room. In this very room. That's why I decided to give you this room. When I want to see your father, I will see your face, you see?" The old mistress said, rubbing the floor with her bronze-ringed hand.

"When was that?"

"Before he went to Fusung; he stopped at Kirin and slept in this room. My eldest son brought him home and he stayed here two nights. My eldest son is in the Weinan area; he is this in shooting in the whole of the Independence Army."

The old woman put up her thumb.

Comrade Kum Song laughed loud and merrily. He felt his heart warm, hearing the history of this room, and he liked this simple old woman.

"Your father was a good talker. He would talk to me late into the night. He was worried about my family being so poor, and said when we won back our country, families like ours must get land before anybody else, so that we would be well-off. I don't remember well, but I think he told me that when Korea became independent, the land, too, should be divided evenly

just as we cut the bean curd. My son was happy to hear that, and said when the day came, he would farm as much as he wished. And he asked me to live long enough to see Korea win independence, you see. But that precious man passed away, leaving this old woman behind. How unfair it is!"

"Give me the cloth, grandma. I'll rub."

"Okay."

The old mistress put down the rag and wiped the corners of her eyes with the edge of her skirt.

"Excuse me, but how old are you now, grandma?"

"I am well past 60."

"You must live a long, long time, and see Korea become independent."

"I'm going to!"

The old woman rose to her feet quickly and she picked up a large bundle of books and moved them to the corner. She was very strong and she was not joking when she said she would see Korea become independent.

Hearing that Comrade Kum Song was moving house, Chae Gyong and his sister came, and then, a little later, Choe Jin Guk and Gi Jun. Gi Jun reported that preparations had all been made for the meeting this evening. Comrade Kum Song had intended to form a branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League.

The young people noisily commented on the narrow room and the low ceiling. Chae Gyong suggested that Comrade Kum Song move over to his house.

"No, what's wrong with this room? There's no need to leave here."

But Chae Gyong paced up and down the room impatiently. Gyong Ju, too, scrutinized in and out of the room. Then she whispered into her brother's ear. As he nodded his head, she left the room. Presently she came back with a large bookcase.

"What is this?"

"You must put your books here."

"Ha ha ha. I should have moved here long ago," said Comrade Kum Song and laughed. Choe Jin Guk and Gi Jun swept the earthen porch and the yard.

Comrade Kum Song got up and went over to the master's room. All the family were gathered there, talking merrily about Kim Hyong Jik. As he entered, the old mistress took his hand and offered him a seat. There were three generations of wives in this family: the grandmother, her daughter-in-law and her

granddaughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law's hair was greying. And the three generations of men had all been in the Independence Army. The grandfather had been killed in action under the command of Ryu Rin Sok; the son and grandson were with an Independence Army company in Weinan. There were quite a few small children, too. Comrade Kum Song drew each of them to him, and asked their names and ages and the children all wanted to sit on his lap.

"You are all fledgling generals. Do you want to shoot the Japs, too?" As Comrade Kum Song said this, one of the boys mimicked a machine-gunner, bringing his stretched-out finger to his eye, and the whole family laughed.

Chae Gyong and his sister put the bookshelf in its proper place and began to put the books in it.

"Brother, look at these. Each book has got so many marks," said Gyong Ju, stealing a glance at the door lest the owner of the books should come back.

"You don't know how hard he works."

"Marx and Lenin must have worked like this."

"Yes, they must have. Nobody has found an easy road to the truth."

After putting all the books in order the brother and sister swept the room and put a desk in a corner.

That evening Comrade Kum Song went to the bank of the Sungari and helped the young workers at the engine depot to organise a branch of the Anti-Imperialist Youth League and came back late at night. He walked down the quiet street, well satisfied over the formation of the first organisation of the working men. Suddenly he remembered Sin Dong Ho. That evening Bong Suk's mother had met Comrade Kum Song and said that her brother had not gone to school, had lain in father's room and wept all day. He stopped and looked towards Sin Dong Ho's house.

When he got back to his lodgings, the mistress was still awake; she opened the gate for him and handed him a letter.

"A little while ago Mr. Paek Rak Jin brought this letter and asked me to give it to you. He said it was from your mother in Fusung...."

"Thank you, grandma."

When he got to his room, Comrade Kum Song sat down at his desk and opened the letter.

At the sight of his mother's hand his heart beat faster, and he felt a lump rising in his throat.

"I am sending this letter through Pak Yang Suk who has been working here. She says she is going through Kirin on her way to Changchun. I am very anxious to know whether you are in good health and if your work is going on smoothly. I always look at the sky towards Kirin. When dark clouds hang low over there, my heart is heavy. Everybody at home is well. Pak Yang Suk will give you detailed news about us all. I am healthy, so are Chol Ju and Yong Ju. Chol Ju is always with his friends, working for the Saenal Juvenile Union. Sometimes he brings his friends home, holding meetings and writing handbills, and in the evening he goes off somewhere with his friends. After you left here, Yong Ju grew quite big and strong. He always says he wants to see you, and coming out into the yard, he asks me where Kirin is. He is quite skilled now in the liaison missions his organisation sends him on. I wonder why he looks so exactly like you did when you were at Mangyongdae and Kangdong.

"Some time ago I heard that both your grandfather and grandmother at Mangyongdae were still all right. But last year was a lean year and I hear that, backed by the Japs, the landlord has become wicked, so I'm afraid they might be very short of food this year.

"This summer your grandfather and second uncle are having to manage without lunch, and they weed with darkened faces, they say. On top of everything, there was a drought this year, and they are worrying about the harvest. My heart bleeds every time I hear from them. I have a great yearning to go home to Mangyongdae, to see grandmother and grandfather as soon as possible, for I could maybe help a bit and lighten their load. But how can I? I must carry forward your father's bidding. When you returned from Hwasong Uisuk School and were setting up the Juvenile Union, you asked me to get a women's union going, did you not? Do you know how delighted I was, that I engraved this on my mind? How proud and happy is the son who, having set out on a revolutionary road to carry out his father's will, is asked to help his mother on that same road. It is the proudest deed in the world. So I have followed your advice. I started work as soon as you had gone, and last night, the Women's Union was founded with the membership of 25. We have a president, organising and propaganda secretaries, and a list of members. The meeting ended in applause; all the women were so happy and excited they could hardly speak. But I know

that this is only a first step, that the road ahead is thorny.

"To be honest, that is really why I am writing. The Women's Union does exist now, but frankly I do not know how to get started and with what. Your uncle says we should continue to expand the organisations, while Chol Ju suggests that what is really needed is for the members to get started doing propaganda for the emancipation of women. Their views are different. Myself I cannot, on the one hand, see that going ahead to enlarge the membership, is going to be easy while the leadership is not yet strong enough to guide the organisation; but on the other we face the problem that the members are not really ready to engage in propaganda work as Chol Ju suggests. So, I am sending you this letter in post-haste. I think I'll need your help in this. I intend to take on full responsibility for the Women's Union I started to help your revolutionary work, so as to carry forward your father's will. As I said once before, I can no longer live as a mere daughter-in-law or the mother of a family. I am a woman, but I know how I must live. I have never shed a tear in front of you sons, and I never forget that your father came to this cold and windswept wilderness and was buried here. Do you know how many times I look up the ridge of Yangji Village a day and what pledges I make?"

Comrade Kum Song took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes. Then he put his hand on the letter and was lost in thought. Presently, he went on reading.

"I am not a woman who is going to live in sorrow because she has tears in her heart. I learned how man should live; and I can't live in sorrow. I learned from your father the lofty spirit and ideas with which men live like men. I did not understand some of your father's words while he was alive; but now I realize their full meaning. The higher man goes up, the purer he becomes spiritually and the wider his vision. I have realized a logic that only when people climb up high and live for a great cause, are they leading worthwhile lives. Your father's life convinced me of this. How lofty is the revolution? The revolutionary spirit and idea cannot but be clear and pure.

"Because I have come to understand these things, I feel righteous and happy. And when everyone understands them, Korea's independence will soon be won. From now on, I will study regularly for the sake of the revolution. I will learn from you. Do

you know how delighted this mother is in telling you this? There are still so many things I do not know. I have read and reread the *Communist Reader* and a few other books that Chol Ju brought to me a while ago; how can I do my duty by reading only these? Your father's plain and simple explanations come back to me very often.

"Study hard and don't renounce your father's will. You must bear in mind that you are a son of Korea, and must not waver in the face of hardship or bend before troubles. You must go ahead courageously.

"I am sorry that I cannot help you more because of our cursed poverty. How many books you want to read! You must be in arrears with your school fees for months now. I enclose ten *won* to pay your school fees, and if there is anything over, buy a pair of canvas shoes—the ones you wore when you left must be worn out by now. Don't worry about me or your brothers and work hard. I am writing to Mr. Paek Rak Jin. Remember me to Bong Suk's mother. I can well imagine how hard-pressed she is. And even you are staying at her house. It must be hard for her. Tell her from me that she must take care of her health and live on firmly. I have so many things to say, but I can't write them all in a letter.

"I will finish now. Please answer quickly about the Women's Union problem I asked you about."

A ten *won* note had been attached on the last page.

Having read the letter, he wiped the tears that flowed down his cheeks. He wept in gratitude for her earnest advice; he wept because he was proud of his mother's pure and lofty idea. As she said, there are few who live with such lofty revolutionary spirit and feel so very happy. But that is how mother lives. Why should I not be proud and happy to have such a mother? There are many kinds of happiness in the world. But where could I find greater happiness than in having such a mother! This is truly sublime, a happiness that invigorates me in my revolutionary activity. Where else could I find that?

Many memories of his mother crowded his mind. He could see her vividly—Mother at Mangyongdae, at Kangdong, Linchiang, Pataokou and Fusung. She had faced many hardships in her life, had not lived in peace a single day. But she had endured it all, endured all suffering with tenderness, generosity, sturdiness and purity. The harsh life had finally elevated her to such

heights. The thorny path behind his mother's image looked like an august picture now.

Comrade Kum Song wrote a reply that very night.

"Dear mother,

"I read your letter sent through Aunt Pak Yang Suk. I am delighted. I recall that when I was leaving home, you advised me not to think of home but to work for the revolution, to carry on where father left off. At that time I looked back again and again, but you were no longer where the horse-driven sleigh had been, though little Yong Ju was waving his hand. Then I realized again that you always avoid places that are sad. So I think that, although I have never seen tears in your eyes, you are the saddest of all people. I can feel your warm tears in this letter. I feel very deeply that your earnest words are brimming with warm love and tears for your son.

"Mother,

"Receiving your letter I feel the luckiest son in the world. Who else has a mother like you? Such a lofty, such a revolutionary mother. There may be many good mothers, but such as you are rare indeed.

"Mother, it is not easy to realize how men should live; difficult, perhaps because it is most noble. If it were easy, how could truth be more precious than diamonds? What gave you that sublime revolutionary spirit? I believe you have found it in your own hard life. Mother, are things very difficult for you now? I know you are still being harassed by great poverty, and that this son of yours still is not able to lighten your burden. It hurts me to accept the ten *won* note you stuck to the last page of your letter.

"Mother, I am really glad to hear that you have started a Women's Union. As I told you when I left, it is very important to draw the women into the Korean revolution. It would be wrong to disregard the strength of women, and harmful to the revolution. This is an important part of uniting the revolutionary forces and it is vital for the emancipation of Korean women.

"Where can you find unhappier women than Korean women? They have truly walked through the dark night.

"Through the ages they have lived under the yoke of feudalism, treated inhumanely. Therefore, our revolution must bring them liberty, freedom and human rights which are most precious. In this sense also, I attach more importance to the women's move-

ment. Please work hard at it, mother, though you have many things to do. The Women's Union must expand and also begin with education and propaganda. Both Uncle's and Chol Ju's views are sound, though you should not go all the way with either on its own. You must push ahead with both organisation and propaganda and education.

"You used to help me when I formed the Saenal Juvenile Union, and you may remember that there, too, we went ahead with both. The same is true of the Women's Union. The only difference is that the Women's Union is within the law which the Saenal Juvenile Union was not. So you must take advantage of the chance to run the Women's Union in the open, for this will enable you to develop faster. Propaganda and education should be done by varied methods—evening classes, lectures, meetings. You should start by opening an evening school and teaching the Korean script so that the women can read books. Only by reading books they will understand their situation and what the revolution means. Being able to run the evening classes in the open means that you can enrol a lot of women and teach them, thus building up the Women's Union. The organisation needs to grow even while it is training its activists.

"You cannot enlarge your organisation without activists, for it would be powerless. So you must start by getting many activists together. You must meet them oftener, give them more tasks, more help and much more careful leadership. I am telling you this, because I am sure you are equal to this work. As you have mentioned, mother, your fledgling Women's Union has just started work; its advancement will depend on how you guide it, so yours is a heavy responsibility.

"Were the revolution not so vitally important, I could hardly ask this of you, you whose life is in any case so hard. I am advising you because I know, mother, that you will receive strength from me. Please go ahead with all your energy, mother. Move ahead to revolutionary victory.

"Mother, many things here are as I foresaw; there are many complicated problems.

"I know the situation of the Korean nationalist movement and communist movement as if it were the palm of my hand. Everywhere Korea's independence, Korea's destiny is discussed and debated as central topic. Many people shed tears, banging the table with their fists. In a way this is a good thing. Everybody beats his chest, and debates problems with passion in order

to recover the country. Each talks in his own way, with his own voice, with his own tone, but the passion is there.

"But, mother, I have an impression that too much passion is being wasted. Nobody knows he is pouring his passion into useless empty talk. And they do not realise that they are squandering time as valuable as gold dust every day.

"It is a terrible shame and very sad.

"I also have an impression that all the movements, without exception, are on the wane, or even on the brink of catastrophe. Both the nationalist and communist movements are fading maybe never to revive. I don't want to analyse the reasons. What is the good of delving into the dirty factional strife that is harming the whole movement? It is true that Japanese imperialist repression is the main reason for the catastrophe, but the tragedy is that we cannot escape citing strife among factions as another. Whither is a movement headed when it has no policy nor tactics, and is engrossed in factional squabbles? To catastrophe. It hurts so much to say it that I can hardly carry on writing. What is it that makes us waste our time on factional strife? We are a nation and we must unite. Look at the humiliation that our nation suffers now, such as we never suffered in five thousand years. We were a proud nation, sagacious and strong. Ours was a brilliant culture. But the dignity of this nation has been trampled underfoot by Japanese invaders. Now we are living through a page of history, stained with black spots of humiliation. How we live now will determine whether our nation's history is buried for good and all or whether there is prosperity in generations to come.

"The question is so serious and urgent. If, in spite of that, we cannot achieve national unity, how can we call ours the dignified five thousand year-old Korean nation and our movement the Korean liberation movement?

"Mother, I shall never take that road. As I told you all about it after my return from Hwasong Uisuk, I shall take the road to truth I found, that road to communism that I learned and recognized.

"I shall think with my own brains and advance along the revolutionary road I have found. The present age, the present reality demands this of me.

"Don't worry about me, mother. I am proud to be a true son of Korea. I know what Korea, plunged into misfortune, is entreating me, nudging my shoulder. How can I forget my weeping country even for a moment? In order to win back our country

and keep our nation one, I shall walk on firmly and climb up the eminence of great prosperity for my country and people.

"I remember what father said. More than once he told me this:

"'In order to understand yourself, put yourself in the position of those who criticise you most. And don't think you live by breathing just because you have lungs; remember that you live by breathing because there is an inexhaustible supply of air.'

"Mother, I know well what this means. Doesn't it mean that I must lower myself and bear in mind that there are masses of people who are above me? So this is how I will live.

"As the simple, modest son of the working people, I shall learn from the people, weep with them over their sorrow and laugh with them over their joys. I shall regard this as essential to the revolution.

"I will send you the *Communist Manifesto* and Gorky's *Mother* to read. When you have read them, you had better lend them to the Women's Union members to read.

"Mother, I wish you good health and good work for revolutionary cause. Please tell Chol Ju to keep well too and to work well in the Saenal Juvenile Union. How I want to see little Yong Ju! I will write separately to uncle and grandfather at Mangyongdae. My work here is such that I will not be able to come home in the summer holidays. So once again, look after yourself, and take good care of the Women's Union.

"Your faithful son"

He finished his letter and opened the door. Day was breaking. The fragrant scent of paulownias wafted into the room on the cool early morning air. His heart overflowed with happiness.

CHAPTER IX

THE INTERNATIONALE

1

Anti-Imperialist Youth League branches were springing up in many schools. The engine depot workers had been the first to have an AIYL, then came the branches at Yuwen Middle School, Wenkuang Middle School and the Law School.

The AIYL was active from the start.

At nights Comrade Kum Song worked with Choe Jin Guk in his back room duplicating propaganda leaflets for the different underground organisations. The manuscripts were diverse. Some were for the engine depot—not duplicated, these, but handwritten by Comrade Kum Song himself. And each ended with the following message:

"Dear comrades, study hard. You are the nucleus of our revolution, so, you must study more than others. Remember your class!"

One day, three active members of the Hwasong Uisuk School DIU came to Kirin, in response to a letter from Comrade Kum Song. The students' society was holding a meeting that evening. On his way to Pastor Li Son Yop's chapel, Comrade Kum Song met Cho Hak Bong, Li Byong Mo, Hwang Hak and Pak Gwang Sik who had gone to meet them in Niumahang Street. Comrade Kum Song shook hands with them all and shook the short Cho Hak Bong's shoulders till the tears rolled out of his small eyes. Li Byong Mo and Hwang Hak, too, were delighted.

"But, why didn't Comrades Kim Bok Nam and Dae Yong come?"

"They could not come because of the organisation there, and Comrade Hwang Hak came with us."

"Anyhow you are welcome. Are all the comrades there

well?"

"They are."

As they said they had eaten, Comrade Kum Song took them straight to the chapel, to look in at the meeting. It was a good meeting, and besides the students it was attended by quite a few nationalists such as Li Son Yop. The speakers spoke on various aspects but every speech arrived at the conclusion that Japanese imperialism must be overthrown, and always there was enthusiastic applause, Pastor Li Son Yop clapping louder than any others.

"Our President really is a hero. Look at how he has trained the members of the society...."

Pastor Li Son Yop was attracted by Comrade Kum Song's activity. He simply would not believe that Comrade Kum Song was a socialist. Comrade Kum Song a socialist, he said to himself, impossible. A socialist could never be so genial and generous or rouse thousands of people. Choe Gon and Wol Pa, yes that kind may be socialists but Comrade Kum Song? If anyone called him a socialist, Li Son Yop would call that man an ignoramus who did not have the slightest idea what socialists were like. As Comrade Kum Song appeared at the rostrum to give a general review on the speeches, the pastor sat up and cheered.

"Hey, who's that old man?" Li Byong Mo asked Pak Gwang Sik seated beside him.

"He is a Christian pastor."

"A pastor clapping his hand with such enthusiasm?"

"Well, even if he is a Christian pastor, when he thinks he should, he does."

"Ha, ha. Who knows, you might make a Communist of the old man yet."

"Is there anything wrong with that?" retorted Pak Gwang Sik with a grin.

"It's just strange...."

Li Byong Mo stared at Li Son Yop's face. It did not look bad, that long face with its close-cropped moustache covering the shallow furrow of the upper lip.

At any rate, everything looked surprising in the eyes of those who had come from Huatien. Looking up at Comrade Kum Song now at the rostrum, their hearts swelled.

When the meeting was over, Li Byong Mo and his friends went to an inn near Tesheng Gate, accompanied by Comrade

Kum Song, where they talked about Huatien throughout the night.

The DIU at Huatien had expanded rapidly largely thanks to the work of Li Byong Mo and Yu Dae Yong. The Hwasong Uisuk School students' organisation had grown and there were good groups in many villages around Huatien. The school authorities had got to know that the DIU had spread its roots underground. They were still fearfully anti-communist and suspected this DIU of being communist oriented. So, one day the principal called in Yu Dae Yong and asked him what the DIU was. He looked angry and glared at Yu. Yu Dae Yong thought his whole organisation had been exposed and decided he must not be craven.

"DIU stands for Down with Imperialism. Is there anything wrong with it, sir?"

"How far has the organisation spread?"

"It's got several branches, and we intend to expand it from now."

"What kind of organisation is it?"

"It's just a youth organisation, sir."

"But the soldiers of the Third Company inform me that a socialist organisation has struck root at Hwasong Uisuk...."

"Well, if we were making a socialist movement, why would we take the trouble to attend Hwasong Uisuk?"

"You are right. Are you sure, then that the DIU is not socialist?"

"It isn't, sir. It is a youth organisation with the aim of overthrowing the Japanese imperialists. How can I advocate socialism? You know my father died fighting in the Independence Army...."

"Um...you are quite right, indeed."

So Yu Dae Yong had managed after all to cheat the tiger-like principal. However, then the drill instructor summoned him for an interrogation. Here, too, Yu Dae Yong asserted firmly that the DIU was not socialist. So then one day the superintendent sent for him and produced a letter which Comrade Kum Song had written to Yu Dae Yong when he first came to Kirin, and showed him a few passages underlined by a pencil. They included: "The countryside is an ideal place. Let us go into the countryside," and "If you need books, come to Kirin. There are many good novels in Kirin."

The superintendent asked him the meaning of the passages

concerning the countryside, and about the titles and contents of the novels.

Yu Dae Yong had quite a difficult time of it for an hour. On the passages about the countryside, Yu Dae Yong said that he had had a debate with Comrade Kum Song on "Which Was Better, Town or Country?" where Comrade Kum Song had stood up for the countryside and that the letter was a reference to this. As for the novels, Yu Dae Yong said that he probably meant *Autumn Moon* and *Pheasant Mountain*. Anyhow Yu Dae Yong was careful and firm and wound up complaining about the school authorities intercepting letters addressed to students. The superintendent blushed and told him he could go.

The authorities of Hwasong Uisuk had gone on trying hard to find out all about the DIU. Meanwhile Yu Dae Yong now openly canvassed the DIU as an anti-imperialist youth organisation. Yu Dae Yong planned to turn out the whole DIU membership for a protest rally against the Hwasong Uisuk authorities.

"And Yu Dae Yong will hold the protest rally and attack Hwasong Uisuk. That is the real reason why Comrade Kim Bok Nam could not come with us. Everybody is in a bustle and talking big, the radical comrades suggesting throwing the teachers out of Hwasong Uisuk School."

Comrade Kum Song sat up without a word.

"We must deal with them," Hwang Hak jumped up and said. "How many students they have persecuted and expelled. They have thrown out every student of a slightly different political hue."

"Do you want to have the DIU put down?" interrupted Cho Hak Bong, who had much greater discretion.

"Comrade Hak Bong is right. Comrade Byong Mo, you must leave for Huatien tomorrow morning. You must go." Comrade Kum Song said.

"Go back to Huatien? But why?" Li Byong Mo jumped up in surprise. They had been talking what was happening at Huatien with some pride, but Comrade Kum Song looked very dissatisfied, and was asking him to go straight back. Li Byong Mo was quite shaken.

"You must go, comrade. And at all costs stop that rally. What do you think would happen if the DIU was completely brought out in the open in a place like Huatien and you fought them face to face? You must not do that."

Comrade Kum Song continued to remonstrate Li Byong Mo for quite a while. Both Li Byong Mo and Hwang Hak remained silent.

"And how many organisations do you have in the country?"

"We have struck roots in several places."

"At Middle and Upper Villages too, which I mentioned when I was leaving?"

"Not in Middle Village yet, but we have got a dozen or so members in Upper Village."

"And are they all out in the open?"

"No. They don't know in which villages we have DIU organisations."

"That's as well. Tell them to make sure that those organisations which are not known stay underground. And tell them they must under no circumstances hold any meeting calling on all members...ask them to be careful not to expose our organisations any further. Be ready to leave tomorrow morning."

Comrade Kum Song did not sleep a wink that night. Nor did Li Byong Mo and Hwang Hak, repenting on their error. Cho Hak Bong did sleep, though very lightly; he opened his eyes at the slightest noise, turning his head to look around before he closed his eyes and breathed evenly again.

And in the morning Li Byong Mo had to leave Kirin. He had nothing to take with him. He put on a broad-rimmed hat made of shavings, which had been given by Comrade Kum Song and hurried out through the West Gate.

2

After Li Byong Mo had gone, Comrade Kum Song thought hard about an important problem. The present situation showed that every organisation that had begun to strike its roots in many areas was becoming more active and pushing ahead. In a sense what had happened in Huatien meant that the people there had a great urge to push ahead against all obstacles, using their present footholds.

He wondered how to handle this situation. The organisations should not be forced to mark time. That would not be good. It would be necessary to integrate the struggle and develop it to

new heights. But there would have to be a nucleus to unify and guide the scattered diamonds that had even now begun to sparkle.

After his profound meditation he decided to form a powerful vanguard to give all the organisations a united leadership. This would make for a degree of flexibility that would enable them to fight or go underground as the situation required, and to advance united to a single goal. Such leadership was vital to preserve the youth movement from the splits and divisions that resulted from the harsh repression under Japanese imperialists and the activities of various factions so concerned with grabbing power that they would undermine the unity and solidarity of the youth movement and obstruct the advance of the genuine communist movement everywhere. Their practices were particularly in evidence in and around Kirin. They can only be dealt with by real Communists with a sound knowledge of strategy and tactics suited to our revolution and the indefatigability of eagles, to sweep away this scum and take control and promote the whole youth movement through their vanguard organisation.

For many a night Comrade Kum Song had not been able to sleep, for thinking about forming a Young Communist League of Korea to fill this need.

One day Kwon Sim called on Comrade Kum Song at his lodgings with a large bundle of papers, under his arm, looking very pleased with himself.

"I have rewritten the article you criticized so kindly. Look at this. An article of 300 pages." Kwon Sim said striking at the bundle.

"Congratulations."

"No, I must congratulate you. Were it not for your sound criticism I would not have been able to write this article. Your views were utterly correct. I think that now this article is the best I have ever written. Do please take a look at it. And if you have any criticism, I will rewrite it yet again."

The excited Kwon Sim kept running his hand across the bundle of papers. He looked thinner than ever, his face was pale and there were dark circles under the eyes.

Comrade Kum Song put the manuscript on the desk and promised to read it soon.

"Look at it closely, please. But I don't think I can get that into a newspaper or magazine in Seoul. If they printed a thing like that, they would most certainly be suspended or closed

down, and the whole staff might be arrested. How wonderful it would be if we could print this kind of article freely and distribute it to the working masses." Kwon Sim lamented, smoking a cigarette.

That day Comrade Kum Song went out with Kwon Sim to Peishan Park. Kwon Sim said this was his first visit to the park since he came to Kirin. He was overjoyed at his completion of the manuscript. He took off his coat and threw it over his shoulder and walked, with a walking stick in his white thin hand. His glasses glittered like some live thing. As they came out of Tesheng Gate, the Peishan came in sight. When they took some more steps, there was a good-looking street at the foot of the mountain, far better than any in the centre of the town. Accompanied by Kwon Sim, Comrade Kum Song went past a tiny stone well called Lienchuan and up the Peishan.

Peishan Hill was dotted with graves, terraces, pavilions and mausoleums, plus a few pagodas. They walked through them and on a steep hillside, Comrade Kum Song took Kwon Sim by the hand.

"How grateful life is, how nice the sunshine and fresh air!" exclaimed Kwon Sim stopping in some way up.

Comrade Kum Song was delighted to see Kwon Sim cheer up. This weak man has managed to complete that enormous article, he thought to himself. How useful it will be to Korean revolution we shall see, but how precious is the passion he has poured into it! But the question is that the passion is atonic.

Looking at Kwon Sim's perspiring profile, he said calmly: "You can never feel this while you stay cooped up in a dark room. So isn't it high time for you to take an active part in practical struggle instead of sitting in your study? Then you will be able to look over a land of the revolution much wider than this earth we are on now."

"Yes. But such happiness is not everybody's lot."

"Why so passive? I value your passion, Mr. Kwon. That's why I am advising you to turn to the practical. It is true theory stimulates practice—practice is indeed impossible without theory. But we must realise that theory is also based on practice."

"Both are important. But surely you can choose either as your sphere for activity?"

Kwon Sim wiped the sweat off his forehead and leaned on his walking stick. Comrade Kum Song lost no time in stretching his hand to help him to come up. A fresh breeze rustled through

the leaves of an oak. Kwon Sim put his hand on the oak to fetch his breath. After a short rest Comrade Kum Song climbed up with Kwon Sim.

"I would like to ask you a question," said Kwon Sim.

"What about?"

"You have founded a number of organisations such as the Juvenile and Students Associations, study groups and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League. What are you aiming to do with them? How do you intend to lead them?"

"I am going to form a group of activists that will give unified leadership to them all."

"What will that be?"

"The Young Communist League."

"Young Communist League?"

"Yes. It is badly needed." Comrade Kum Song said confidently.

"So you are building up layer on layer, the whole movement shaped like a pyramid?" Kwon Sim exclaimed.

He had thought that Comrade Kum Song would run the revolutionary movement in a different way from all others, but he had not realised that it would go beyond a movement of mass enlightenment. However, the creation of a Young Communist League to lead the others, it became clear that this really was a communist movement.

Kwon Sim was filled with admiration. How could he take this outstanding, unique political course in these turbulent times? Strangely, today Kwon Sim felt as if a huge mountain had soared up beside him, casting a shadow on him.

At the top of the hill the wind was fresher and covered by a bluish veil, the walled town spread at their feet. The monotonous sound of a gong came up from somewhere below.

Comrade Kum Song and Kwon Sim looked at the mausoleum known as the Yowang Mausoleum. The closed front gate had an imposing roof, and on it hung a board with pictures and some calligraphy on them. They went in through the small side gate to find a building several storeys high but without walls, and Yowang's towering temple a little way behind. They were not sure when the temple was built; the ornaments on the eaves had faded but the sculpture was exquisite and magnificent. Leaning on his walking stick, Kwon Sim examined the sculptures one by one. A corpulent caretaker came out and greeted Comrade Kum Song and Kwon Sim by putting the palms of his hands

together. He ushered them into the dark and silent temple to the portrait of Yowang. There was a faint scent of incense floated in the air. The caretaker gave a tedious account of the history of Yowang. He told them that Yowang granted men's wishes and Comrade Kum Song and Kwon Sim listened, smiling. They left the temple and turned into the road behind where some long-haired fortune-tellers were practising their art watched by a big crowd.

"So people have their fortune told after offering prayers to Yowang, eh? They do not seem very willing to believe in their own strength...." Kwon Sim lamented, holding his walking stick with the other hand.

"It is difficult to put an end to this before man is free from misfortune."

"A serious problem, indeed."

"If we Communists are not entrusted with the mission of solving the fundamental questions of man, we will have nothing to be proud of."

"Quite right."

The scent of the green foliage wafted in the breeze, as if bringing in a glad news from somewhere in the far distant future.

Li Byong Mo came back from Huatien where he had carried out Comrade Kum Song's instructions. He was in high spirits, he even had Yu Dae Yong's Mauser revolver tucked away in his bosom.

A few days after his return, a meeting was held at Cha Duk Bo's house on the Sungari to inaugurate the Young Communist League of Korea. Informed of the importance of this meeting by Gi Jun, Cha Duk Bo had sent his mother and sister off to visit a neighbour. Then he had cleaned the rooms. His house had been chosen as the venue of the meeting because it was a little distance from central part of the town, and the upper room was fairly large. Cha Duk Bo had had a few foundry workers inconspicuously standing guard long before the young people began to arrive.

"You know, Comrade Kum Song will be at the meeting, and I heard that it was particularly important, so we workers must make sure that it takes place all right. So you hide in here, and if any stranger appears, come out as if you've just been to the toilet. And cough and talk to him loud for everyone inside to hear." Cha Duk Bo was detailing a group of foundry workers.

A lanky foundry worker had brought his small hammer stuck in his belt. His idea was that if a policeman or spy sneaked up while he was on guard, he would kill him with the hammer and throw him into the Sungari. The foundry workers hid themselves in the shed and behind the fence and kept careful watch.

Young people began to gather. Choe Jin Guk was the first to arrive, bringing Li Byong Mo, Cho Hak Bong and Hwang Hak. Li Byong Mo and his friends were introduced to Cha Duk Bo and asked him many questions about the situation at the Kirin engine depot. Li Byong Mo kept his Mauser in his inside pocket, and as he talked, he sometimes felt it with his hand.

Before long Pak Gwang Sik and Gyong Ju came. Choe Jin Guk introduced Gyong Ju to Li Byong Mo and his comrades. On such occasions the mischievous Choe Jin Guk became quite respectful. Doing up the brass buttons on his dark uniform, he said gravely: "Now, you must meet each other: this is Comrade Chae Gyong Ju." Everybody looked grave and serious. This was not only because they had met for the first time, but also because they were conscious of the fact that tonight's meeting would be attended by representatives from many areas besides Kirin, that the revolutionary network had been extended quite a lot. Choe Jin Guk, too, clearly realized that their movement was no longer just a student movement. So did Gyong Ju. She wondered in admiration how the revolution could expand its forces steadily like this. She went down to the boarded floor of the kitchen and read a book. She had begun with *Das Capital* a few days ago, and had already read a lot of pages. Gyong Ju was reading the Measurement of Value of *Das Capital*, when Comrade Kum Song came in with her brother, Choe Gi Jun, Kang Chang Su and Chang Dok Sun. Gyong Ju immediately put the book down and got to her feet. Chang Dok Sun and Chae Gyong came into the kitchen.

"You are reading as hard as ever, Comrade Gyong Ju. What book is it?" Chang Dok Sun said, holding up the book lying on the floor. Gyong Ju smiled bashfully.

"Um, *Capital*...well, you have a good brother."

Chang Dok Sun and Chae Gyong sat down and started reading again Comrade Kum Song's draft program and constitution for the YCL.

In the upper room Comrade Kum Song gave some mimeographed handbills to Gi Jun and explained their contents.

The young foundry workers, who had been on guard out-

side, had seen Comrade Kum Song arrive; and they came out into the yard, very pleased.

"Hasn't Comrade Kum Song just come?"

"He arrived just now."

"Can't we go in and hear him speak?"

"You still talk like that after all your education? You must stick at your post."

"But it might be a very important speech."

"Lower your voices. Tonight we must keep a very careful watch on this yard. That's our duty," said the youth with the hammer at his hip, stroking the hammer the while. So they went back to their respective posts and hid. All was quiet round the house and their sharp eyes stared into the darkness as they listened for Comrade Kum Song's voice, which should soon be ringing out of Cha Duk Bo's house.

Presently the historic meeting to found the YCL of Korea opened with Comrade Kum Song in the chair. He opened the meeting in a soft, firm voice, emphasising its importance, likening it to the pioneers of the age making oaths before their departure, holding their torches high in the pitch-dark night. All hearts beat louder at these words.

"The Young Communist League of Korea we are going to inaugurate tonight is an organisation that has an important bearing on our revolutionary development. Why do we need this organisation now, why should we form it now? Because it is demanded by our revolutionary development today.

"As you all know, at present we are expanding many of our organisations over a large area. These organisations have already laid solid foundations and they are very active. All the organisations, without exception, are rushing ahead with dynamic passion, like sparkling diamonds. As a result, our movement as a whole has grown in scope and strength and it needs good organizing and sound methods. This, we can say, is the new requirement of our movement."

He stopped for a few moments to look at the young people, who sat there with bowed heads, listened attentively.

"Now what specifically does this come down to? It is this: We need a nucleus at the centre of our revolutionary movement, that will give steadfast and efficient leadership, developing active struggle of all the organisations to new heights. Only thus can we meet the immediate needs of our revolutionary movement. How we handle this will determine our ability to save the Korean

youth movement, which is now being broken down by factionalist manoeuvres that obstruct the advancement of a real communist movement. The factionalists are working frantically for their political ambitions; they are disorganizing the Korean youth movement and destroying its unity. Choe Gon and Wol Pa's manoeuvrings are typical. They are so busy trying to get power, to become leaders that they are confusing young people with absurd theories and trampling the youth movement underfoot; we know this too well. We must sweep out this rotten trash and build up a communist nucleus to save the Korean youth movement.

"This central organisation should also be used to train more new generation Communists, who will use their knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory and buckle down to work for the Korean revolution with an indefatigable fighting spirit.

"The Young Communist League of Korea which we are now inaugurating is an inevitable product of our revolutionary development, and of our movement. So we should not try to identify it with any of the other Marxist movements we come across."

Pak Gwang Sik and Cho Hak Bong were avidly making notes. Cho Hak Bong, who wrote faster than Pak Gwang Sik, had got down nearly all Comrade Kum Song's words. Chang Dok Sun and Gi Jun sat on either side of Comrade Kum Song.

Kang Chang Su, who was sitting next to Chang Dok Sun, looked more serious than anybody else as he sat and listened. The months he had spent working in Liberation Village had made him sturdier and his face was heavily tanned. Comrade Kum Song's words seemed to go straight to his heart. His reference to the destruction of the Korean youth movement by the foul wranglings among ambitious would-be leaders reminded him of an appalling case.

While in Japan he had seen how the factional strife had affected the Korean students there, and the infighting among themselves instead of uniting against the common enemy. And back in Seoul he had to witness a still more lamentable case. In Seoul he had met a youth called Choe Yong Su whom he had known in Japan. Like himself, Choe had left the Japanese university and gone home. This Choe Yong Su had intended to join a youth society; but even before joining it, he was trapped by the M-L group and Tuesday group. Whenever Kang Chang Su went to see Choe Yong Su at his home, there was a visitor; at times a fellow with powerful spectacles was talking with Choe Yong Su

in undertones; and at times a man with a pale, hard-featured face was talking emphatically, shaking Choe's knee. Choe Yong Su told Kang Chang Su that the bespectacled man belonged to the M-L group and the pale-faced fellow to the Tuesday group, and that both were trying to pull Choe into their respective groups because Choe Yong Su had been to university. He had added that these two fellows were leaders of one and the same youth society, each trying to outmanoeuvre the other faction for control.

"This is a mess," grumbled Choe Yong Su with anger. "How can you engage in the youth movement in this appalling situation? So I have refused to join in the society, but both of them keep coming, the bastards!"

And this was not the end of it. These two of them wound up fighting in some back-alley in Chongno in broad daylight, over Choe Yong Su's refusal to join the society. They went on fighting even after they were arrested by the police and put in jail, where they spilled the beans about the youth society, with the result that nearly all its members were arrested, even Choe Yong Su, who had had nothing at all to do with the society, was thrown in jail. So all that these factionalists achieved was to break up the youth society, that had been formed to fight under the Marxist banner.

Comrade Kum Song said that we should rid ourselves of this stinking trash and form a new nucleus to save the Korean youth movement. It seemed very good sense.

So far the revolutionary organisations and their movements led by Comrade Kum Song had blazed a new trail to overcome with united efforts the noxious influence of the factions and the resulting losses. And today they were creating a new backbone for the whole, so that they would be able to mop up the whole factionalist mess for good and all. Kang Chang Su's heart was full at the thought of this. Tears came to his eyes as he thought that he was reviving and sublimely happy as a Korean Communist at this glorious moment. He looked at Chae Gyong's face. The clear dew was shining in his eyes obviously because he too had this same feeling.

"The inauguration of this organisation tonight will clarify the nature and objective of the new banner of our movement and will put the whole movement in a position to move vigorously ahead. We need a clear-cut orientation, tactics, methods and good revolutionary slogans. A method that cannot turn our pas-

sion, wisdom, endeavour, sweat, and everything we dedicate to the revolution for the clear-cut interests of the revolution is not our method. Equipped with new tactics and sound methods we will be invincible; our pure new ranks are full of strength, and very different from all that has preceded us."

Again Comrade Kum Song stopped to look round at the audience.

"Comrades, one of the most important questions facing world revolution today is the liberation of colonial nations. And the times demand that this be solved on Marxist-Leninist lines. Once aware of this, how can we sit arms folded and wait others to achieve this for us? All the exploited and oppressed people in many countries in the East are eager to see this solved. This is a vital problem for us and for all other oppressed nations in the East. So, we must shoulder our responsibility and become the pioneers. Basing ourselves on this position we are going to form this vanguard organisation, an organisation that is capable of applying the Marxist-Leninist method creatively to the Korean revolution and activating the Korean people into a force for revolution. By using this organisation to win the revolution in our country we will contribute to the national liberation movement in all colonies, and contribute to the triumph of world revolution. This is a new road, an untrodden road, a road beset by many hardships. But we must have the pride, confidence and conviction that victory must be ours at last, if we apply Marxism-Leninism and are creative in our attitudes. Therefore, we each of us, as a soldier of the Korean revolution, as a Communist aspiring for the ultimate triumph of world revolution, must recognize this new and important stage in history and reaffirm his resolve to dedicate his life-blood to the cause."

The audience were straining for each word. The young eyes sparkled, in a silent room where only their loud breathing could be heard. They thought they had heard some sound outside. Everybody strained their ears. Comrade Kum Song stopped speaking and asked Cha Duk Bo to go out and look. Cha Duk Bo and Gi Jun rose to their feet.

"You stay, Comrade Gi Jun. I'll go." Cha Duk Bo went out through the kitchen, clenching his fists. He came back before long.

"As safe as a fortress! Don't worry. You are guarded by dependable workers," said Cha Duk Bo, his large nose twitching. This made everybody laugh.

Comrade Kum Song made several further statements. When

his speech was over, Chae Gyong rose and read out the draft program and constitution.

All present listened quietly. "We dedicate our lives and property to the revolution without hesitation"—these words aroused unbounded pride and confidence in their hearts. There was a pungency in this idea of declaring to the world that they were very valuable human beings.

As Chae Gyong finished reading out the draft, everybody relaxed a little.

The program and constitution were voted in by a show of hands, and then officers were elected. Comrade Kum Song was unanimously elected secretary of the YCL. Chae Gyong was put in charge of organisation and Choe Jin Guk of propaganda. Following the election of the officers, they were given some assignments.

The foundation members of the Young Communist League of Korea were excited, gripped by an august feeling that they could not explain.

The meeting ended with the *Internationale*.

Chae Gyong led the song with a deep voice. Everyone followed him in deep, low voices.

*Arise, ye starvelings from your slumbers
Arise, ye criminals of want
For reason in revolt now thunders
And at last ends the age of cant*

....

Pak Gwang Sik sang, swinging his bony fist like a baton. Chang Dok Sun's dark eyebrows twitched as he glued his eyes on the roundish face of Hwang Hak opposite him, and joined in each chorus. Hwang Hak sang, looking at the opposite wall, as if to avoid his stare. Everybody sang except Gyong Ju. She turned away her face and wept, patting the corners of her eyes with the string of her jacket. But who would blame her for not singing? At this very moment there was a pulsation in her heart which was warmer than the song and made her shed hot tears.

Comrade Kum Song looked around at the eyes burning in an ecstasy of joy. Though they were few in number, they were in the vanguard of the revolution, united, with one heart, one body, one voice. Iron ranks which could not be burnt or broken, that did not flinch at prison or gallows—these ranks were form-

ing up right here and now—the most genuine, the most real, the most great and the most austere movement had been born.

Thus the revolutionary movement had climbed another hill, Kirin, and the footsteps could be seen from afar in Huatien and Fusung. The thorny road he had trekked since he had formed the DIU, nay since he had crossed the Amnok-gang River—this road was linked to this high hill. But he had not yet covered such a long distance as he should look back. This was only a first step in the light of the road in front of him.

Comrade Kum Song joined the chorus with a passionate voice that came from the bottom of his heart.

The young men from the engine depot just outside the house joined the chorus in whispers. They sang the *Internationale* leaning against the shed or fence. A young man standing on guard behind the shed sang among the swaying pumpkin leaves. This song would shed bright rays over their dark lives, and bring them joy and hope. So they were very emotional and had an urge to jump around the dark yard.

3

After the inauguration of the YCL, Comrade Kum Song sent out a number of young men to the villages, Li Byong Mo among them. He would not concentrate his colleagues on any one place, because he intended to expand the organisation to a wider area.

Under his grand plan Li Byong Mo was assigned to Chialun near Changchun, Cho Hak Bong to Kuyushu and Hwang Hak back to Huatien. And Chang Dok Sun was instructed to leave the Vocational School and go to the Tunhua district. This was to enlarge the organisation gradually to the whole of east Manchuria.

Everybody went off on their assignments, full of hope. Hwang Hak who was going to Huatien received special instructions from Comrade Kum Song on enlarging the DIU, getting it renamed Anti-Imperialist Youth League and starting up a YCL branch with the AIYL active members. Those going to Tunhua, Chialun and Kuyushu were to start AIYL branches, and work to propagate Marxism-Leninism. They were to make a special effort to extend local enlightenment movement.

You cannot make revolution at a distance; nor can you con-

trol vast areas simply, by enforcing a law. You have to start with the nearest place, from where you are above all, making sure that people use their own brains, do their own thinking, that each person educates ten others, and each of those another ten, and so on so that the whole family, the whole village and the whole community are united firmly with one revolutionary idea.

Comrade Kum Song also discussed their method of work with them in detail. Those assigned to other districts left for their destinations as confidently as if they were wearing chain mail and a sword. It was the vigorous Kang Chang Su who went back to Liberation Village. Chang Dok Sun put his cases of books in a carriage, and before leaving, recited a poem he had made up on the spot called *A Storm Rises over a Revolutionary Sea* and laughed. He was happy yet was not entirely free from worry. The eagle who has flown from his nest must meet the wind and rain and fly through the dark night, must learn to endure.

Suddenly he remembered Comrade Kum Song saying.

"You must hold the torch high even if your fist gets burnt."

And he resolved that that was how he would live.

Comrade Kum Song left town and went with Chae Gyong to see Chang Dok Sun off. He stood for quite a while to watch until the carriage was out of sight.

"How vigorous and nice they are!" he said. "They will spread the seeds wherever they go, so that new shoots of revolution come up. Our future is full of hope. But...."

He was going to mention the hard struggle to tend the shoots but stopped. This really impressed Chae Gyong.

Meanwhile, Li Byong Mo and Cho Hak Bong assigned to Chialun and Kuyushu went to the railway station to get on the train bound for Changchun. They, too, could hardly contain their excitement. They were going to explore new areas, and on top of that, start up branches of the YCL, the vanguard of the revolution. They would be holding aloft a new banner, getting started on a new revolutionary stage.

O Bo Bae's family were at the station because they were moving to Kuyushu. Many girl students had come to the station and were up on the platform seeing Bo Bae off. Gyong Ju and Paek Sun Hui would not set Bo Bae free.

"Don't cry, Bo Bae. We can work for the revolution anywhere, in Kirin or in Kuyushu. What's the difference? We won't be able to meet as often as we used to here, that's all. At any rate, remember what Comrade Kum Song said last night; work

well with Cho Hak Bong in Kuyushu...." Gyong Ju said soothingly. Bo Bae nodded.

Bo Bae's father had made the rounds of many villages, and had, at last, found a tract of land in Kuyushu. To be more exact, he found a tract of flatland that had to be turned into a rice field. So he had hurried back to Kirin in order to go there and start digging it in autumn, and was now leaving with his family.

Li Byong Mo and Cho Hak Bong carried the family's luggage into the train, lifting Bo Bae's younger brothers into the train. Li Byong Mo bought a few bags of sweets at a stall and gave them to the boys.

"Have some sweets, boys, do. Your sister may cry and wail—but it's much better to eat." Li Byong Mo said, putting a sweet into the mouth of each of them.

Bo Bae's family got on the train. The girl students were standing below the carriage step. At that moment, Pak Gwang Sik from Wenkuang Middle School ran to the platform with great strides, his fists clenched. He made for the other entrance where there was no one, and grabbing the handrail, jumped into the carriage, just as the train started to move. Pak Gwang Sik wiped the sweat for a while, holding the handrail. As the train moved, the girls seeing off Bo Bae passed below the carriage stair where Pak Gwang Sik was standing. Paek Sun Hui who had been wiping away her tears, was dumbfounded when she looked up at Pak Gwang Sik. As he noticed the girl's, Pak Gwang Sik grinned, waved the handkerchief with which he had wiped the sweat.

"Look, Comrade Gwang Sik is on the train," Paek Sun Hui whispered to Gyong Ju.

"Where is he going?" asked Gyong Ju drying the tears.

"Oh, he is not going anywhere. He just jumped on to the train because Bo Bae was leaving."

"But he would hardly likely to..." commented Gyong Ju nonchalantly. They knew Pak Gwang Sik loved Bo Bae.

One evening Paek Sun Hui had happened to see Bo Bae talking with Pak Gwang Sik in a back street on her way home from a study group gathering; Bo Bae had come out first. Pak Gwang Sik talked, shaking his clenched hand but fled as he saw Paek Sun Hui. Paek Sun Hui hurried over to Bo Bae and asked her if it was not Pak Gwang Sik. Bo Bae answered it was.

"What did he say?"

O Bo Bae lowered her eyes bashfully. And after a few

more steps she replied: "He asked me not to go to Kuyushu but stay at his house to continue with my studies."

"That's a good proposal. But if you are to remain in Kirin to study, you had better stay at your uncle's; you shouldn't go to Comrade Pak's home, should you?"

"You are right. I'm very much afraid of Comrade Pak's fists. I like his passion, though..." Bo Bae said, blushing. Bo Bae's words tickled Paek Sun Hui no end. This was how she had found out that they were in love.

At twilight the train ran across a plain, puffing white clouds of smoke. From the horizon where the sun had just set, yellow air wriggled and gradually covered the whole of the plain and brought everything very close. The passengers became nostalgic and looked at the twilight of the continent that enwrapped the windows.

Pak Gwang Sik and Bo Bae met on the carriage stair. Pak Gwang Sik took Bo Bae's tiny hand in his unusually large hand.

"Comrade Bo Bae, don't think ill of me. I regard you as my revolutionary comrade. As a close revolutionary comrade. And there is no closer relationship than that," Pak Gwang Sik said. The train gave jerk and Bo Bae was thrown against Pak Gwang Sik, who took her shoulders in his hands and held her at arm's length.

"Write to me the minute you arrive. And if you can't stay in Kuyushu, please do let me know. Then I will come and fetch you back. I didn't tell Comrade Cho Hak Bong anything. Though between comrades, it is a bit embarrassing to tell him about us. How I wish you would stay with me—Comrade Bo Bae, I got on the train to tell you that. But I'll have to get off at this station."

Indeed, Pak Gwang Sik went down the carriage steps helter-skelter, as the train pulled into a small station. He gave Bo Bae's hand a hard squeeze in the darkness. Bo Bae wanted to follow him down, but Pak Gwang Sik pushed her back saying that the train was starting and indeed it whistled and was off again.

Li Byong Mo and Cho Hak Bong sat with Bo Bae's brothers on their laps, teaching them a song. The two students sang together, followed up by the two little ones. It was a children's song, called *Sparrows*. It was striking how the two young men sat singing a duet in their rough voices; but the little ones singing together with their heads thrown back were still more spec-

tacular, the one on Li Byong Mo's lap looking at Cho Hak Bong's slanting eyes and the other on Cho Hak Bong's lap staring at Li Byong Mo's thin neck. They held the attention of Bo Bae's whole family and all the other passengers besides.

My mother and father are waiting.
My mother and father are waiting.
Good-bye friends, twitter, twitter.
Good-bye friends, twitter, twitter.

The children sang, pursing their lips, to look like sparrows. The younger one who was on Cho Hak Bong's lap lisped, singing "titter, titter" instead of "twitter, twitter," which raised a laugh from everybody.

Laughter did not cease in the carriage. The passengers got up and flocked around the young men and kids. They sang and sang. Finally Li Byong Mo taught the children a dance, waving his hands. The boys jumped down from the young men's laps and pulling up their pants, started dancing and moving their hands. There was another peal of laughter, and some of the audience clapped their hands, too.

The train moved with a rhythmic sound, as the dark continent slipped past. The sound of the whistle was heard now and then. The children fell asleep; and Li Byong Mo and Cho Hak Bong were sleeping leaning against the back of their seat. Cho Hak Bong seemed to be already wandering in a dreamland, for his lips, as small as a girl's, were smiling gently. Bo Bae did not know why, but she felt tears welling up to her eyes.

Those young men, as simple-hearted as children, are Marxists who are endeavouring to transform society, are they not? Bo Bae thought. How can they be so naive just as small kids?

O Bo Bae could not sleep, and went out to the entrance again. It was completely black around her and a cold wind blew past. She thought Pak Gwang Sik must be still waiting at the small station, because no train had passed yet. She could not help the lump in her throat and she sighed softly as she gripped the handrail.

Having dispatched the youths to different areas, Comrade Kum Song took a village near Kirin as his own assignment. It was at the base of Mt. Lungtan and was called Changtou Village.

Some time ago at Cha Duk Bo's he had met Cha Duk Bo's cousin, a young man called Cha Duk Man. Like Cha Duk Bo, he was solidly built, and was said to be farming in a village called Changtou Village. Cha Duk Bo said his cousin was totally illiterate, and asked whether it was possible to set up a Marxist-Leninist study group or a branch of the AIYL.

"Why not? The working class and the peasants must learn the teachings of Marx and Lenin, so that they will work together for the revolution."

Cha Duk Man grinned as he said this. That day Comrade Kum Song got a good idea of the situation in Changtou Village. This village was frequented by Independence Army units under the influence of "Chongui-bu", but there was no school though an old scholar who wore a topknot was teaching several youngsters *One Thousand Characters* and *Poems without Titles*. The only organisation they had was a youth association that the Independence Army had started and though it was doing virtually nothing, the youngsters had remained members of the association because it had accumulated some funds through joint farming.

Cha Duk Man did not speak well; he was a simple soul who tended to bluster and to stutter out his words. When Comrade Kum Song was leaving Cha Duk Bo's, Cha Duk Man bowed low and asked him if he could come over to Changtou Village.

"Certainly I will. I will be there next Saturday evening." Comrade Kum Song had readily accepted Duk Man's offer.

That Saturday evening Comrade Kum Song left Kirin. He had to cover 40 *ri* but he walked so fast that he reached Changtou Village before nightfall.

Duk Man's house stood in front of a pond beside some poplar trees. As he went into the yard, he heard noises made by young people in the house. The room seemed to be lit but

the light did not filter out of the patched paper window.

As he called for the master the door opened and the bare-foot Duk Man came running out, and bowed low as he had done at his cousin's. Then all the youths in the room went out into the yard to greet the visitor amid a general murmur—they had obviously been told that he was coming. Chong Gum Sok from Liberation Village was among them. He was grinning broadly as he approached to greet Comrade Kum Song.

"Do you remember me? I am Chong Gum Sok from Liberation Village."

"How could I forget you? But what brings you here, Comrade Chong?" inquired Comrade Kum Song, shaking his hand.

"I've come here for my grandfather's funeral—my mother's father."

"Oh, how sad."

Comrade Kum Song smiled at the face of this tall dark-eyed young man. He had been delighted when, some time ago, he heard the news that this young man who had been under Wol Pa's influence, had joined in the AIYL and become very active.

Comrade Kum Song followed the youths into the room which, narrow as a basket, was packed tight with a dozen or so youths. Now it was clear why the light did not show through the window. There was a lamp hung up beside the sliding door and a light as thin as a needle quivered at the edge of a small saucer, which flickered as soon as anybody got up. All the faces looked dark red. Duk Man opened a new packet of cigarette and put it in front of Comrade Kum Song.

"I don't smoke. But do, please smoke, whoever wants to."

Comrade Kum Song pushed back the packet towards the young neighbours. As Comrade Kum Song had promised to come today, Duk Man had had the young people gathered at his house, while warning his parents that a revolutionary from Kirin was coming and that they must not stick their nose in the discussions held by the young folk.

So now his mother and father were talking in whispers in the kitchen.

"Is a revolutionary any different from an Independence Army soldier, old man?"

"They say they are. A bit higher up than the Independence Army."

"So, you mean the young man who has come in just now is

higher than the Independence Army? He is very young...."

"You don't know him. As soon as he came to Kirin, the whole of the town began to boil. That's something. I think Korea will be independent very soon now." Duk Man's father said gravely and puffed out clouds of smoke.

"He does look very dignified," said his wife, peeping into the room through a crack in the door.

"They might see you from the room," the old man warned, poking his wife in the knee.

In the upper room Comrade Kum Song looked round at the youths and asked them why they were wasting precious time burning the lamp. None of them answered. They just sat looking at Comrade Kum Song, about whom they had heard so much. Chong Gum Sok looked around at the young men, smilingly. He had not yet told them about the revolutionary movement in Liberation Village; and since Comrade Kum Song was here now, he was very anxious to tell the story.

"You have no evening school here?"

"No, sir, they haven't," Chong Gum Sok replied bluntly.

"No school at all?"

"No, sir."

"You can't learn Korean, then. Isn't there anybody here who can teach?"

The youths did not reply.

"There are a few—a few educated young men, but they won't open an evening school." Chong Gum Sok replied again, shrugging his shoulders.

"Who are they?"

"That fellow over there, too, finished primary school."

Chong Gum Sok pointed to a youth sitting beside the sliding door. The young man bent his head and started fidgeting with the top of his sock.

"Then you mean you have got the cinder, eh?"

"Yes, we have it. We can build a fire in this village, too."

"Good. Let us buckle down to it. Well, which primary school did you finish?" Comrade Kum Song asked the youth who was still pulling up the top of his sock.

"A primary school at Kirin."

"Are you farming now?"

"Yes."

Comrade Kum Song changed the subject to find out more about the situation in the village. Presently the people began

to feel at ease and joined in the conversation. Han Gyong Sik, who had attended primary school, was shy at first, but he was quite a good talker and his voice was soft like Cho Hak Bong's, was slightly nasal, but not offensively so. He took the view that Changtou Village had not been as free of troubles as Duk Man suggested for, alongside the Independence Army, a "Koryo Communist Youth League" group had been swaggering about the village. In addition to the Independence Army's youth association, there were a few youths under the influence of the KCYL, and sometimes members of the two groups started fighting.

The young people gathered here tonight were not in either group. After discussing it with Han Gyong Sik, Duk Man had only brought in young people who were neutral.

"And how educated are they?"

"About the same with us. One of the KCYL members was at Wenkuang Middle School, and two of those strongly influenced by the Independence Army had attended primary schools. The rest are all illiterates."

"What do they do?"

"You mean what kind of farming?"

"No, their revolutionary activities?"

"Revolutionary activities? Oh, no, they are just idling around."

"Ha ha ha. Idling around, eh?"

The young people joined in Comrade Kum Song's laughter. Next day, he planned to give a public lecture.

"Let everybody attend this evening's lecture—men and women, young and old. This is a Korean village, so there should be a revolutionary organisation and a school, and if there isn't, there should at least be an evening class, shouldn't there? You young men must not allow your village to remain in such poor shape," Comrade Kum Song gently remonstrated the youths and instructed Chong Gum Sok from Liberation Village to help them bring the people in. Chong was hugely invigorated.

Comrade Kum Song went over to the house that had been chosen for the lecture, and helped the owner to move out the straw matting loom and warp weights. Comrade Kum Song got him to move several things into the next room. There was a lot of junks on the wall shelf and two God of Wealth bowls which Comrade Kum Song said smilingly might as well stay where they were. The master's face reddened because he thought Comrade Kum Song was laughing at the bowls.

By dusk, the whole village was animated. The young men visited every house, some several times to make sure. Duk Man called on old Pak Tae Sun, the teacher at the private school, who asked him all sorts of questions.

"But how old did he look?"

"I don't know, sir. He is as young as we are."

"Eloquent?"

"So eloquent that a certain An Muk was scared out of his wits and fled."

"You rascal, what do you mean by that? Mr. An had a hard time in prison and he left right after his release."

"Anyhow, do come and hear the lecture, sir, then you can judge yourself."

"You are right there, I suppose," Pak Tae Sun nodded and stroked his beard.

The villagers were noisily excited when they heard that the young man who had so successfully dealt with An Muk in a debate had come.

"They say he is very eloquent. He interrupted Mr. An Muk's speech and made a speech at Chiangnan Park, and his tongue ran on wheels."

"I don't know, but they say that he speaks for ten minutes on end without taking a breath."

"How can he speak without breathing?"

"They say he breathes after speaking. Anyway they say he is tremendous. When he speaks, the listeners' hearts leap."

At any rate it was a very unusual event for Changtou Village, and the villagers flocked to the meeting place well before sunset. Everybody came—the women, the old people, everybody. Chong Gum Sok brought his uncle who had held the funeral service and all his relations who had attended the funeral.

Standing in front of the earthen porch Duk Man and Han Gyong Sik received people. They were assisted by Chong Gum Sok who gestured them to come in. Whenever the villagers expressed their gratitude to him for having come all the way from Liberation Village, Chong Gum Sok grinned, saying "Who know, I might be offered a bride from your village."

When it was dark, the three-*kan* room was packed to overflowing. Comrade Kum Song's roaring laughter could be heard in the middle room. He was talking to Pak Tae Sun who taught at the private school and several other older people. He was

such an excellent conversationist that he was holding the attention of all present. He was so young that at first old Pak Tae Sun was not inclined to take him seriously, but before he knew, he was completely taken with him. Because he was with the old people, he referred to the passages of *Great Learning* (one of the four Confucian classics—Tr.) and said that seeking truth through matter was the process of polishing knowledge, but knowledge and practice must be united as an integral whole. Old Pak Tae Sun looked at him wide-eyed.

He must be well-read in the Chinese classics, the old man decided. This was no ordinary young man.

In the upper and lower rooms too, all eyes were on Comrade Kum Song. People sat up straight well their knees pulled up, so enthralled by his conversation that they forgot that they had come to hear a formal lecture. He was so simple and informal that they had also forgotten the fact that this was the youth who had dealt with An Muk. But they would come to themselves now and then, and were stunned to note that here was seated an uncommon personality. Young as he was, his way of talking, his voice and expression—everything about him—betrayed the outline of sublime perfection.

The kitchen was crowded with women who were also listening attentively to the conversation going on in the middle room. Chong Gum Sok's aunt, in a mourning hood stuck her head through the sliding door to look into the middle room and was quite taken aback.

"Good God! It is such a young man and he speaks so well."

"How old does he look?"

"He looks less than 20."

Chong Gum Sok's aunt again craned her neck to look in. She stared for a long while, but as the long tail of her mourning hood touched the top of the lamp, she winced and lowered her head.

"What Gum Sok from Liberation Village said was right. He is not an ordinary man."

"His father used to lead the whole Korean independence movement, that's what they say."

"No wonder. He strikes one as the son of a great man."

The women in the kitchen whispered among themselves, unable to see into the next room freely.

However, the youths under the influence of the Independ-

ence Army or the KCYL huddled in to the corner, wondering about the questions they would raise with Comrade Kum Song.

Presently the lecture began, but it was not a formal speech.

"We are gathered here this evening because I have got something to tell you villagers. I would prefer to talk to you informally and to hear your views too, instead of standing up. All right?..."

The villagers agreed. So he changed his plan to deliver a lecture and started a talk.

Everybody listened quietly to his explanation of the domestic situation. He detailed the fact that since the March 1st Uprising the Japs had turned Korea into a living hell, clamouring for "Cultured Government". And he explained the essence of the "Law on Keeping the Peace", "15-year Plan for the Increase of Rice Production", "Ordinance on the Korean Agricultural Society", "Ordinance on Industrial Cooperatives", and "Ordinance on Reclamation of Land", which the Japs had promulgated in the last two or three years. All these had a monstrous design to plunder Korea at will. Among others he made a detailed explanation of the essence of the "Ordinance on Reclamation of Land".

"By the way, do smoke, please. I'm going to be talking for quite a while yet. So do be comfortable and stretch your knees."

"You talk most interestingly."

"Do smoke if you wish."

Only then many of the audience stretched their knees and lit their cigarettes. Soon the room was filled with smoke.

Old Pak Tae Sun's bamboo pipe was too long, so he held it up above the head of the man in front of him.

"But how should we Koreans live? Should we remain bound hand and foot by the Japs, and tell them, 'Dig up our gold, our silver, all our treasures in the ground; take all our rice and cattle and fell our trees?' Of course, we Koreans did not sit idle. We staged the March 1st Uprising, the Volunteers struggle and the Independence Army. In these fights, we Koreans shed much blood. Mr. Choe Ik Hyon, though old, formed Volunteers units and fought and died on Tsushima Island; Mr. Ryu Rin Sok, too, fought and died in Manchuria and during the March 1st Uprising all the Korean people rose up as one man and shouted hurrahs for independence. When one arm was cut off by the Jap sword, we grabbed the banner in the other hand, and shouted hurrahs, and when that was also cut off, we held the banner

in our teeth and still shouted hurrahs. And how much blood the Independence Army shed! The fields of Korea and Manchuria are dyed in blood. Yet we have not regained our independence. We have fought, but we have not recovered our country yet. So, what must we do? This is where we stand. We are in a decisive situation, indeed. If we try to rebuild the independence movement with the same old armour, and weapon and the same methods, not with new, the history will repeat itself with the abortive independence movement."

There was dead silence. As the names of Choe Ik Hyon and Ryu Rin Sok and the stories of the Independence Army's struggle were told the nationalist youths who had been seated in a corner of the uppermost room, raised their lowered heads and stared at Comrade Kum Song's face. In fact, they had expected Comrade Kum Song to attack and speak ill of the Independence Army as Choe Gon had done the other day. But he was completely different from Choe Gon; he even spoke well of the Independence Army. And the youths were forced to lay aside their prejudices.

Having raised the question of new armour, new weapon, and new methods for winning independence, he stressed the need for all Koreans to unite. And not just superficially. The greater the hardships, the more firmly they must unite, must form a unity as hard as steel. The workers must unite among themselves, the peasants among themselves, young people among themselves, and the women, too, among themselves, and all these forces must unite together into great masses which would move forward bravely at the words of command.

The audience admired Comrade Kum Song's art of speech, and realized that once united nothing would be impossible to them. They gazed at the movements of his hand.

"The Independence Army did fight and shed their blood, but as they did not rely on the strength of the large sectors of the Korean people, they could not achieve results. How can we defeat the Japs with a handful of people carrying pistols, shooting a mere handful of our enemies?"

Comrade Kum Song told a long story about Li Chil Bok who had gone into the homeland and had died a tragic death.

While he was talking, a fair-complexioned youth in spectacles, which looked rather out of place in a village, was deliberately making a noise near the door of the upper room. He belonged to the KCYL. He seemed to lack the courage to raise

questions, overwhelmed by the atmosphere of the room. Duk Man glared fiercely at this youth, wishing that he was near enough to use his fist on him.

When can we knock them out? Duk Man wondered, remembering the meeting of railway workers he had witnessed at his cousin's. It gave him an impression of a huge mass of fire. He wished to God such a mass of fire could come to his village, and exterminate those dandies of the KCYL. His whole body, and especially his clenched fists itched for action.

Comrade Kum Song went on speaking.

He said that the masses must unite, not blindly but consciously: They must know why and how they must unite. And to know this, they must first learn to read Korean. Here he stopped for a few moments to look smilingly around and told an old story about an illiterate man who had to walk 100 *ri* to visit a scholar, to find out what was written in a letter from his brother.

"The letter was only five lines long, but as he could not read, he had to walk 200 *ri*, stopping off at taverns to eat and sleep—ha, ha, ha."

There was a burst of laughter from the audience.

"What can you do with such men? Can you win independence for Korea by the joint efforts of all the ignoramuses? If we are to win back our country, we must study hard and unite; we must learn, we should do both in the light of our own history, and of world situation. We need to know these things, for only if we know them can we use all our strength and unite into a tremendous force. If you cannot distinguish what is right yourselves, but only do as others tell you to do;—like go and take this to the porch, or that in the hall and you obey, you can do nothing. And, as I see the situation here, that is just how you are behaving in Changtoun Village, ha ha ha."

"You are right there," interposed old Pak Tae Sun.

"Yes, he is right, but, why don't you teach us so, sir?"

"He does teach; teach *Heaven, Earth, and....*"

"Ha, ha, ha."

Everybody in the place burst out laughing. The atmosphere had now turned into that in a living room. Chong Gum Sok's aunt and Han Gyong Sik's mother became audacious enough to edge up to the front of the sliding door and look up at Comrade Kum Song. Other women too, would crane their necks and then quickly hide their faces.

"Tut, tut, how handsome he is!"

Chong Gum Sok's aunt and Han Gyong Sik's mother wondered in admiration clicking their tongues. Everybody was pleasantly excited. They had never heard such a plain and sensible talk.

Comrade Kum Song concluded by stressing that it was essential for everybody in Changtou Village to learn to read Korean and to work hard to win back their country. The villagers could have listened to this kind of talk all night and felt profoundly grateful to him for understanding their situation and for expressing such concern about their hard lives.

After the lecture, the youths came back to Duk Man's. They were very excited, and were saying that they must not leave the gang of KCYLers alone. Chong Gum Sok encouraged them. Even Duk Man, who looked so tender-hearted, seemed to be itching for action.

"You must not behave like that. We must draw them into our fold and educate them. Attacking or avoiding them is only dissipating our strength; if we get them to join us we are adding to our strength. The problem is how to lead them onto the right road."

These words brought down their passion.

Comrade Kum Song asked for a drink of cold water before he left Changtou Village, and Duk Man, Han Gyong Sik and Chong Gum Sok followed him. It was late, and Milky Way was high in the night sky shedding bright light.

CHAPTER X

AUTUMN

1

The autumn was deepening. Though the hot sun beat down at midday, the sky was cool. Everything was withering and drying. Yellow leaves were falling in the streets and the whole of Hsuantienfeng forest on the Yuantien Ridge outside the North Pole Gate was turning yellow. The terraces and the roofs of the temples on Peishan Hill looked clearer, adding their bit to the autumn colour.

Around this time it was reported that Choe Gon and other leaders of the "General Bureau of the Korean Communist Party in Manchuria" had all been arrested by the Japanese police while holding a meeting at Lienchuan. The news was carried by the press in Seoul, as well as in the "Chongui-bu" paper *Taedongminbo* and *Sinminbo*, the organ of "Sinmin-bu".

Comrade Kum Song was deep in thought with a Seoul newspaper spread out before him. They have done a lot of harm to the Korean revolution, he thought, but he still felt sad that they had been arrested by the Japanese police.

Why should Korean people be arbitrarily arrested by the Japs? Why should we live as such a nation? His heart was burning with indignation.

He was also worried about the three-group merger conference now going on at Fu Hsing-tai's rice-cleaning mill.

The conference which had begun in early spring was not yet over though the autumn was far advanced. Why this delay? What were they discussing? Who could be certain that those blackguards who made wholesale arrests of Communists at

Lungching might not come to Kirin and arrest nationalists as well? They are so crafty that you can never be sure if they might not bribe Chang Tso-lin's military clique.

Comrade Kum Song could not remain indifferent. He wished that the nationalists who were holding their merger conference could come to some sort of agreement, regardless of how or what, as soon as possible to achieve unity. For once they are united, we will be able to draw them into the battle against the Japanese.

One day, on his way back from school, he dropped in at the Fu Hsing-tai's rice-cleaning mill. He wanted to see how the meeting was going on.

"Here you are, President. Come in." The proprietor with a broad forehead said, bending the wing of the fan with a cutting plier in the yard.

"Why don't you attend the meeting and only work, sir?"

"I have nothing to say at the meeting. Those eloquent gentlemen discuss everything that needs to be discussed...."

The proprietor laughed uproariously.

He belonged to "Chongui-bu". But he was much more worried about business than the independence movement, though he did his share by giving financial help to members. He had invested his bit of capital in the mill and he worked hard himself, checking and running the machinery. As Comrade Kum Song said he had come to observe the meeting, the proprietor invited him to go in.

The entrance to the hall was littered with footwear of all shapes and sizes. Li Pil Su's stentorian voice was heard in the room. He was saying that it was wrong to get mixed up between individuals and the organization, but immediately many voices protested that there was nothing contradictory at all in this. Comrade Kum Song went to the door and knocked.

"Who is it?" Chong Min Su got up and opened the door.

"Why, what brought you here of all places?"

"To listen to the meeting, sir. May I come in?"

"Why not. Come right in."

Comrade Kum Song entered and bowed to all present.

"Ho, ho, ho. So you have come. Are you going to examine us old folk in the movement?"

Old Li Gap Mu, who seldom joked, was delighted to see him and talked to him jocosely. Maybe he did this in an endeavour to ease the strained atmosphere of the room.

"He may watch us, but I don't think he will attack us just because the meeting is not going well." The fat So Gun Ha joked back, perceiving old Li Gap Mu's disposition. His comment raised some laughter around the room. Li Gwang Jin was the only person who did not laugh. Somehow his face was unusually dusky. He was flanked by Yu Sang Jo, the coxcomb. They formed a great contrast; the former like a bear, the latter a floppy fox.

The meeting had been hotly debating the advisability of forming a nationalist party as the "internal nucleus". This issue had been raised by "Sinmin-bu" which had been the most obstructionist. As "Chongui-bu" had held the initiative during the whole meeting, "Sinmin-bu" had suddenly come up with this idea of a political party,—something that had never been envisaged at the outset—"like a wooden roller thrusts out in the dark". It was designed to throw the meeting back to where it had started in order to disorganise the forces of "Chongui-bu" who had held the initiative all through the meeting. The theory was that all the items discussed so far concerned the "external autonomy", but in order to run this "external autonomy" properly, there should be an "internal nucleus". In other words, they asserted that there should not be state apparatuses alone, there should also exist a political party as real power.

Both "Chongui-bu" and "Chamui-bu" knew that this ostentatious assertion was, in fact, aimed at breaking down completely any agreement that had been reached after months of effort and many fierce squabbles. "Chongui-bu" opposed it adamantly from the outset. On this all their leaders were united. But this was not the case with "Chamui-bu", for though old Sim Hak saw through "Sinmin-bu's" crafty manoeuvre and opposed it, quite a few "Chamui-bu" leaders supported the proposal, for they, too, were unhappy at "Chongui-bu" having taken the lead.

So their debate today had been rather heated, though "Chongui-bu" countered "Sinmin-bu's" arguments with considerable composure.

"Why do you suddenly raise such a serious matter, which is completely new, at the final stage of our meeting? Our view on 'nucleus' is this: Once the 'external autonomy' is built up properly, it would automatically include your 'internal nucleus'."

That was what Paek Rak Jin was saying, his head raised, when Comrade Kum Song entered the room. Then a "Sinmin-bu" speaker got up to reply.

"'External autonomy' is 'external autonomy'; it is no political party. Do you think we can carry out flexible policies with only external autonomy? Forming an external structure with no nucleus is contradictory to the principle of organisation."

"Then how come you have only just discovered that now?" retorted Paek Rak Jin. "You didn't seem to know it earlier, so why have you only realized it now?"

At this a "Chamui-bu" man got up and said: "Whether we realized it or not, we've got to discuss it, if it is vital to our movement. You mean we should avoid this vital problem because it would delay the meeting?"

They argued hotly, "Sinmin-bu" and "Chamui-bu" joining to attack "Chongui-bu".

Choe Hwal from the "Provisional Government in Shanghai", his face red, cried out that the two sides should meet halfway. But he did not say how. Old Li Gap Mu and Sim Hak listened gravely to the debate. Somehow this problem had estranged the two old men. Both of them were thinking of An Muk. If he had been here, the meeting would not have turned out like this. And they sighed grievously, recalling An Muk waving his hat from the train at Kirin railway station, his eyes brimming with tears.

Presently, old Li Gap Mu suggested that the question of an "internal nucleus" having been raised, it should be considered. Then everybody on "Chongui-bu" revolted against their senior, except Paek Rak Jin, who did not dare to reject the old man's proposal and, sweating, lit a cigarette. He understood that the old man could see no way except to compromise. He rubbed his face again and again with his sweat-soaked handkerchief.

Comrade Kum Song examined the undercurrents closely. For though they seemed to be discussing a serious matter concerning so-called internal nucleus and external autonomy, in the last analysis, they were squabbling over who, in the new united body, would hold power. How was it possible that they could be engrossed in such a fight for half a year?

Next day he again dropped into the Fu Hsing-tai's rice-cleaning mill on his way home from school. Now they had entered into a formal deliberation of the problem of an "internal nucleus"; that much seemed to have been decided the previous night. So this time they were fighting over the program for this nucleus when formed, and fighting harder than the day before.

He sat down for a little while, then he went out again. I

must not leave this state of affairs as it is. We have suffered a lot because of factional strife and here they are fighting shamelessly. What is the good of wrangling like this, divorced from the masses? If they want to win the country's independence they should be discussing ways of arousing the masses, of fostering their strength. But here they are scrambling for power, each trying to gain control. How appalling it is! Of course, they are lagging behind the times and have class limitations, so we cannot expect much from them in the national liberation struggle, and yet, if they are gathered here to work for Korea's independence, they should work together and have some sort of united body.

Comrade Kum Song felt both sorrow and anger.

He resolved to have a go at them and thought about putting on a comic sketch about it, an allegory in which three ministers of the old government would represent "Sinmin-bu", "Chamui-bu" and "Chongui-bu". Their words and actions would show up the dirty factional interests, the true motives behind their actions at the merger conference!

He pulled in Sin Dong Ho, who had been plunged in agony.

And, in fact, Sin Dong Ho's agony had increased. His family was in an awful situation. His father was a drunkard. Every day when he got home, he found him drunk and getting rowdy on a whole bottle of spirits that his daughter fetched for him. Sometimes the old man would swear at him mistaking him for a Jap. The daughter always tried to avoid her father, but he would simply send his daughter-in-law to fetch his bottle. And if she tried to evade it, he would have a go at his wife. When he wanted booze, he would half-close his eyes and clamour for it, like a child. And as soon as he got it, he got drunk and became violent. At such times Sin Dong Ho could hardly control his father. His sister and sister-in-law would sit and weep and sometimes, he would find the eldest child alone in the kitchen crying. Whenever there was such a scene, Sin Dong Ho would be in an awful state all day. And it was not just the father's drunken violence that caused the family to weep. They felt the whole family's livelihood in danger, as Sin Dong Ho knew all too well; he felt this fear in every fibre of his body and became very restless. Now Sin Dong Ho had realized that like his father, sister-in-law and sister, he was not capable of escaping the yoke of life.

The play was in rehearsal in the main building at Pak Gwang Sik's and the girls were practising some songs at Gyong Ju's house—it was a one-act play, so it had been decided to put on

some song and dance as well. Every night the voices of the girls singing accompanied by harmonicas and violins flowed out of Gyong Ju's house.

2

The autumn sun was hot, and the rice threshing was in full swing at every house in Changtou Village. They hit rice stalks at stones—they had to hit them several times, larger ones more than ten times, before all the grains fell out. It was sheer drudgery, getting the grains off a rice stalk. The sweat flowed down the threshers' bodies and the husky rice grains pricked them. But the people had no time to think about how hard the work was, for Hong, the landlord, had come down from Changchun and was nagging at them to hurry up with the threshing. All the villagers, young and old, had turned out for the work. And in the families who had got behind, even the little children had to work, bringing in the rice from the fields in front of the village. The men carried the crops on their backs, the women on their heads. Quite a few houses had finished the threshing. At such houses the landlord Hong's agent weighed the bags of rice with a scale. Now all they had to do was to carry the measured rice to Kirin station.

Cha Duk Man's family, too, had brought in their rice and threshed it on three rocks held up by logs. Now Cha Duk Man's tiny house was all but buried in rice stalks. Threshed stalks were heaped up in one corner and another corner was taken up by a mountain of rice grains in the husks, while more than 30 measured bags of rice were piled up on the earthen porch. Although this rice was grown by Duk Man's family, it was not theirs to eat. Their own rice was still lying on the ground unthreshed. In front of the pile of rice stalks there was a tiny heap of rice beside two heaps of flat husks of about equal size. These husks had already been winnowed when the grain was selected to fill the bags. There would be few grains, but Duk Man's family had gathered them in the hope of getting perhaps a gourdful. Duk Man's family spread rice stalks and threshed—some of them were broken and had to be threshed on the ground.

Duk Man was stripped to the waist, the sweat streaming

down his neck and back. His father sweated most of all, his grey-bearded chin and elbows were dripping wet. The mother sweated least, and though she threshed as hard as either husband or son, sweat only showed in the wrinkled corners of her eyes. She was very tenacious.

Everybody moved in silence. After a year's hard work, the harvest brought them grief not joy. They had had many dreams about the harvest, had pinned all their hopes on the autumn, but now that their crop was nearly in, they knew that it had come to nothing. Threshing the stalks had worn them out and they sighed deeply, for as they threshed away at the rice stalks, they felt as if it was their hollow lives that they were threshing out.

"Mother, you need a rest."

"No, I'm all right. Go on, you have a rest."

Mother and son exchanged no further words, and the father pretended not to hear them. There was great sorrow in their hearts.

"Hello there."

It was Comrade Kum Song who came into the yard as the threshing was at its height. He was wearing the dark school uniform. All the family looked up; Cha Duk Man threw down his flail, and walked over to him, bowed and then shook hands.

"Why, you rascal. Greeting a guest, half naked," his mother rebuked, clicking her tongue. Duk Man raised a hand on the back of his head and made for where his jacket was.

"You have come in the daytime today, sir," said Cha Duk Man's father. Comrade Kum Song had often visited them, but only at night, and he had always left before dawn.

"Today is a half-holiday, so I came here earlier. So you have finished threshing, eh? Did you have a reasonable crop?"

"Not too bad."

Comrade Kum Song went over to the heap of unhusked rice, picked up a handful and checked the grains on the palm of his hand.

"Well ripened. How wide is your rice field?"

"About five *majigi* (a *majigi* is a patch of field that needs a *mal* or about 18 litres of seed—Tr.)."

"Five *majigi*? Then you should have reaped some 15 *som* (one *som* is a little over five bushels—Tr.)—one *majigi* produces at least three *som*. Right?"

"We must have reaped 15 *som*, at least, but what's the

use?" grumbled Duk Man's father, sitting limply on the pile of stalks and pulling out his tobacco pouch.

Comrade Kum Song sat down beside him. The old man's gloomy expression seemed to fade as tenderness showed on the wrinkled corners of his eyes.

"You mean you will have nothing left when you have paid your rent?"

"Not only the rent. Things are really terrible." The old man heaved so deep a sigh that the very ground seemed to sink. He pushed shredded tobacco into his pipe with a hand so big and rough that it looked more like a tree stump.

"So then you have to pay the land tax, yes?"

"Yes. And we must pay for many other things."

The old man struck the flint on the pipe. He took several puffs before he went on.

"60 per cent of our crop we have to pay in rent. And then, of course, we must pay land tax. And we have many debts we must repay. We had to borrow food this year, and we still haven't managed to pay back all the food we had to borrow the two previous years. We are up to our ears in debt, and I feel as if I were eating without earning anything."

"At what rate of interest?"

"Seven per cent. But it is higher when you borrow food. If you borrow a bag in summer, you pay back half as much again in autumn."

Again the old man sighed and puffed away at his pipe.

As Comrade Kum Song and the old man started talking, mother and son stopped threshing, squatted down and threw about the ears of rice.

"Mother, please make supper early."

"All right, but we have no side-dishes."

Mother and son talked in undertones.

Having heard out the old man's long complaints Comrade Kum Song went to the village with Duk Man.

Towards dusk a chilly wind began to blow and the air suddenly seemed to cool. Straws flew up into the bleak air, floating across the whole surface of the pond in front of Duk Man's house.

"Are you still running the evening school?"

"We can't. Hong comes and urges us to hurry with the threshing; we have to thresh all evening, too, so we can't find

the time. The villagers have been so hard at work that they can hardly stand up."

"Your villagers till Hong's land?"

"Most of them. He owns all the fields in front of the village."

Comrade Kum Song did not say any more. He saw before his eyes Duk Man's father's dark red back he had seen just before. His back seen through the tattered shirt, the back which had been burnt by the sun and soaked in salt, when the skin had peeled off over and over—a back that looked more like baked pottery than human flesh. The villagers worked on the land all year to reap the ripe grains. It was heavy drudgery and the sun was so hot that it almost melted their whole bodies. And now the results of their labour were being handed over to others. It was outrageous. He knew this situation well yet now he felt as if he saw this robber-dominated world for the first time. Suddenly he recalled Mangyongdae and Duk Man's father's back seemed to change into his grandfather's. One day, while he was still at Changdok School, he came home to find his grandfather threshing wheat, wearing a tattered old shirt. It was so worn that he could see his bare shoulders. His shirt was dripping with sweat. What is he doing now? he wondered. Which is he threshing, millet or beans? Whatever he is doing, the situation there will be the same as here. It is certain that where he is the Japs will be giving him a difficult time. Grandfather will be seated on the earthen porch, smoking and sighing, with his wrinkled face full of grief.

He walked along the edge of the pond with Cha Duk Man and made for a place where there stood houses in rows. He had been so shocked that he did not know where he was going.

"Will you come to see Comrade Gyong Sik?"

"Let's, if he is in. You should not stop the evening school however busy you are."

In fact, he had seen to it that evening schools were opened for the peasants and women in Changtjou Village, and had assigned Han Gyong Sik and a nationalist youth as teachers. He had come here to see whether the schools were running all right.

Comrade Kum Song had almost reached Han Gyong Sik's when he heard a loud angry voice from the other side of an earthen wall.

"What is that?" inquired Comrade Kum Song, stopping abruptly.

"That's Hong the landlord raising hell. This is his agent's house."

"Who is he raising hell at?"

"Villagers. He's doing it every day now."

Comrade Kum Song listened to the angry shouts ringing out of the wall.

It was a loud hoarse voice, loud enough to shake the wall. A tapping sound was heard occasionally. He listened for other voices, but he could not. The hoarse voice was dominant.

"Quite a few of the villagers are inside," Duk Man whispered, having looked through a crack in the wall.

Without a word Comrade Kum Song walked over towards the outer yard where a poplar stood.

"Are you going in?"

"Let's."

As Comrade Kum Song made his way into the inner yard, Duk Man felt elated. I wonder what he is going to do, he thought, as he followed in his wake. In the outer yard they saw Hong's carriage and two horses tied to the poplar; the animals were shaking their manes and snorting.

Comrade Kum Song pushed open the wooden gate and went in. The bull-necked Hong was sitting on a silk cushion in the hall looking down at the yard, where a dozen or so peasants stood, their hands on their bellies. Only two squatted in a corner, smoking with composure.

"Now, check Li Chi Gun's account. He must know how much he owes me, unless he is trying to cheat me." Hong shouted at his agent who sat beside him. He worked his fan incessantly, the skirts of his grey *turumagi* tucked up. He carried the fan all the year round because he was so fat that the slightest movement caused him to perspire.

Hong's grey-haired agent, who had silver-rimmed spectacles on his nose, was busy leafing the dark-covered account book. Beside him was a pile of other account books and bundles of papers that seemed to be IOU's. He also had an abacus and inkstone with a slender writing brush that he must just have been using. Obviously they had called in the peasants in an attempt to force some sort of payment out of them.

The agent opened the account book and read out how much Li Chi Gun owed. He had borrowed money on such and such dates and the interest on the 10 *won* that he had borrowed five

years ago was now 80 *won*. The agent had a metallic voice as sharp as the edge of a razor.

That was not all Li Chi Gun owed. His rent had been in arrear every year, and the debts had multiplied in geometrical progression.

Li Chi Gun was standing in the centre of the yard with a lowered head. Presently he raised his head and uttered, "My lord".

"So what have you to say for yourself? Come on, speak up. Even the worst criminal has something to say."

Hong looked at the peasant, fanning his red face.

"You said you have clearly written down on the account book. So it might be correct. But it is simply impossible to pay back all the debts this year. I hope you will receive this year's rent this time and hold over the other debts for the time being. Have mercy on me, my lord."

"What are you talking about? If you don't pay your debts, there will be further interest; and you want to put off payment again? Have you no conscience, man? Stop talking and give up the land. However much land I may have, I have none to let to you."

"It is unjust, sir."

"What do you mean by unjust? The land is mine. You are tilling my land, you know?"

"I know, sir."

"You know, but you are trying to be stubborn and hang on? Ha ha ha ha." Hong laughed, shaking his whole body. Then his face brightening, Hong changed his stance, pulling in his ankle.

"All right, I'll tell you what I'll do that should be fair to you and me both. You ask to postpone repaying the old debts for another year. You think that you can pay them off next year? And what about the year next? I'm sure it will be just the same story again. So listen to me: I am going to build a rice-cleaning mill at Changchun, so I need a labourer there. You give me one, and that will settle the account. I know you cannot leave the farm to come to the mill—that you mustn't do. So send me your son O Son to Changchun. If he works there for four or five years, that would cover your debts. I have discussed this with old Chong, and it should serve both you and me, you know. Old Chong promised to send his son. Because you tillers of my land are so poor that I am trying to help you solve your problems humanely."

Hong pointed to old Chong with his fan and crossed his legs.

"You are right, sir. If they can't understand such kindness, they must be very brazen." The agent supported his master. He wanted to rob the villagers of their crops and of their sons.

This crafty fellow was planning to run his rice-cleaning mill, by making use of his tenants. He had calculated that he could herd the indebted tenants at will like a flock of sheep and use their labour almost free because, tied to his land, their lives depended on his decisions. And he believed that the success of his new enterprise depended on his tactics.

Hong intended to get scores of men from the village of Changtou alone. So as soon as he arrived at this village he roared like a tiger over the problem of farm rents, and now he commanded that they give him manpower. All those gathered here were destined to lose sons or brothers. Duk Man's family were also on the list, as he intended to have Duk Man, but they had not yet been summoned.

"My lord."

Old Chong came forward shaking his tressed hair.

"You have just now said that I have promised to offer my son; you must not take away a man in such a crafty way. I never said I would offer my son. Can you imagine, sir, how could I make a living without my son? When I have paid the farm rent this year there will not be enough food left for a month. Who would feed the family without my son's sturdy hand? If you have any kindness, sir, you will understand this situation."

This was old Chong's statement, which made Hong jump up.

"By a crafty method? What the hell do you mean by that? I sympathise with the situation of a tenant in debt who has no means to pay me back, I ask you to come and work for me. Is that a crafty method? You scoundrel, you robber! Give back the land right now, right away!" Hong howled, hitting at the floor of the hall with the tip of his fan.

At this, Comrade Kum Song elbowed through the crowd to come forward. And he spoke to the peasants.

"Villagers, why do you bow your heads and take his insults, as if you were criminals? Why do you cringe before him? Do you eat grain that that fellow has grown by the sweat of his brow? Stand up and hold your heads high. The grains you have threshed are the fruits of your own labour. The landlord gets fat on the grain he plunders, not by chewing those deeds he's holding. But

you stay like dead soul and hear his foul curses meekly. It is not you but he who is a robber; he has robbed you of all your crops and, still not satisfied, he wants to take away your sons."

"Why, the...who is that student? He called me a robber, didn't he?" Hong spread his fan with his trembling hand and worked it; he was on pins and needles.

"Watch out, sir. He is a leader of the independence movement." Hong's agent whispered to his master, poking at his hip. But Hong was so excited that he did not hear the warning.

However, Comrade Kum Song paid no heed to the angry landlord's clamours and went on with his encouraging words to the peasants. Then he turned and attacked the infuriated landlord.

"It is well known that your kind are the most ferocious robbers in the world. The power that backs you up is robbers' power. Remember this well: Today these people gathered here obey you like sheep, but they will not do so forever. You had better remember that instead of building palaces for robbers with their sweat and blood, some day they will raise their fists and destroy those palaces."

After this denunciation Comrade Kum Song turned to the peasants and spreading both his arms, said:

"Well, let's get out of here. We must live proudly. We must believe in our strength and claim our legitimate rights."

He pushed the peasants towards the gate as if embracing them all. The peasants were high-spirited and came out with a general murmur. One of them felt so enraged that he spat, glaring at the landlord.

"Stop! Where are you going?" roared Hong raising his heavy body to his feet. His agent lost no time in pulling the hem of his *turumagi*.

"Please calm yourself, sir. He is no ordinary student. He is a leader of the Independence Army, I said."

"Wh-a-t? Independence Army? He is such a young student..."

"Humph, take it easy, sir. He may be carrying a pistol. This place is different from Changchun." The agent barely managed to hold back Hong who was going to jump down from the hall. Hong's neck and face were hot and red with excitement; his fleshy cheeks quivered convulsively, and his huge belly was heaving.

The eaves cast a shadow on the yard that was now clear of

the peasants, and a cat was washing his whiskers after eating a rat.

"That student even forced Mr. An Muk to stop his speech at Kirin. Not only that. After Mr. An was arrested he roused the public to get him out. If you provoke that student, sir, you might well lose your life."

Since he lived in Changtou Village, the agent did not want his master to cause any trouble, for he feared that it was he, the agent who would suffer for it after Hong had left.

"He forced An Muk to stop his speech; so what? You mean I must keep silence when I am called a robber? Who owns the fields in front of Changtou Village? I own the land, I lend it and collect the rents, and I am a robber? God damn you! What are you so frightened for?"

"Oh, please, do take care, sir. If you don't, you could be a target for gunmen here in Kirin."

"Are you afraid so much of gunmen? You stupid ass." Hong picked up the bundles of account books and papers and threw them in the agent's face. The latter fell back. His spectacles slipped and flew over to a corner.

3

That night both peasants' and women's evening schools in Changtou Village opened again after a long interval. The villagers flocked to the school building, very animated.

The news that Comrade Kum Song had denounced Hong at his agent's house and brought back the peasants had gone all round the village, and everybody was talking about it.

"Anyway, who is this Hong? Is he as clever as our teacher?"

"So, as soon as the teacher came forward, Hong and his agent changed colour. The agent tried to soothe his master in whispers. Ha ha ha."

"They say Hong did not hear the warning, so the agent hit Hong on the hip. Ha ha ha."

The villagers gathered at the evening school. The news had been very exciting for all, even those who had never been to school before. They were noisy crew.

Both evening classes were packed. From the women's even-

ing class came the sound of vigorous voices reading the alphabet. At the blackboard the tall Han Gyong Sik led the reading of the alphabet by the women who recited loudly in unison. There were so many newcomers this evening, that the teacher was teaching the Korean alphabet from the beginning.

We need not fear the landlords. That Hong owns a lot of land and swaggers about, but as soon as Comrade Kum Song comes to the village, he can't make a stir. So thinking everybody had become braver and they read with still louder voices.

"*Na nya no nyo.*"

"*Na nya no nyo.*"

The girls repeated after the teacher, reading the letters with their serene eyes. And the housewives who had never attended the evening school, read with zeal, now conscious that this evening school was a force that would help bring down the landlords.

"Sister, *ga* looks like a scythe with a club."

"Indeed. And *gya* looks like a scythe beside a tree with two branches...."

After reading out some letters of the alphabet the women commented and laughed cheerily.

The lesson began at the peasants' evening school, too. Here Comrade Kum Song himself was teaching. Standing at the blackboard, he pointed to the letters one by one. All the pupils were following the teacher with their vigorous voices.

Meanwhile, at the agent's house, Hong was preparing to leave. The agent's whole family had come out to spread a tiger-skin cushion in the carriage and load his luggage. Putting a bottle of *paigal* (Chinese vodka—Tr.) in the carriage, the agent whispered, "Drink it on your way, sir." Hong got on the carriage in a gloomy silence.

"I assure you that I'll get the loading started at Kirin station from tomorrow," said the agent looking up at Hong sitting in the carriage. Still Hong did not reply. Everything had gone wrong. The rents could easily be collected without him. The purpose of his visit had been to take away some people. But his plan had ended in a fiasco. His agent had said he feared the bullets but Hong feared the young man—his attitude had really frightened him.

The carriage ran towards the plain over which the moon was rising. Hong sat in the carriage and glared out with bloodshot eyes. The land all round him belonged to him, but his heart was

frozen and he felt as if the tenants might appear at every corner, sword in hand, to vent their anger on him.

That night after school Comrade Kum Song gathered the men and women evening school students together and spoke to them till late at night.

Why do we unite and learn how to read and write? In order not to have to live the way folk in Changtou Village live now. At present the cruel landlord Hong has got them under his thumb. He takes away the crops that they have tended all year by the sweat of their brow and even forces them to give him workers free. Today old Chong said Hong tried to take men away by craft, and he was right. On the strength of the land he owns, Hong wields his authority and enriches his own life by hacking off the peasants' flesh and bone and sucking their blood. How long must we be exploited by a man like that? How long must we obey this robber's orders and have our flesh hacked off and our bones scraped dry?

Everybody sitting in or outside the room was listening attentively, their eyes focussed on Comrade Kum Song who sat beside the lamp. Tonight's gathering was different from usual. Because they felt their hard-pressed lives with every fibre of their bodies, each word of his touched their hearts.

We must get ourselves out of this miserable situation as soon as possible. Our misery will not last for ever. Sooner or later, this unfair society must come to an end. But it will not end of its own accord. The faster we unite and push out the Japs, the sooner the end will be in sight. At present the landlords are backed up by the Japanese imperialists. Therefore, if we are to hit out at the landlords, we must knock down the Japs first. For without ridding ourselves of the Japs, we cannot hit the landlords. This is why we must unite, and that is why we have to learn.

Listening to him, the young people clenched their fists. Duk Man and Han Gyong Sik and his comrades were elated because today's incident had awoken the village. They wished to God that Comrade Kum Song would ask them to hit at the landlord and set fire to the agent's house. Duk Man's hands had always itched for drastic action. But he knew no action could be taken unless Comrade Kum Song gave word, so he forced himself to be calm.

Next day Comrade Kum Song made a round of houses at Changtou Village. What crops did they have left after paying Hong's rents? Did they have enough food to see them through the coming winter? Did they have money to buy clothes for the

children and old people? Comrade Kum Song visited one house after another deeply worried. All the families without exception were hard pressed. After delivering 60 per cent of their crop in rent, paying land taxes and other debts, they had almost nothing left. Once he entered a house he felt too heartbroken to leave. He wanted to say some words of comfort and encouragement to those people with their clouded faces. And at every house he visited, they plucked at his sleeves, inviting him to lunch. Their kindness only made his heart ache.

As he came to Duk Man's, Comrade Kum Song found Duk Man's mother winnowing in the middle of the yard. She was alone. He was told that hotly pressed by the landlord's agent, the rice sacks piled up on the earthen porch had been carried to Kirin in twos and threes on the ox carts of neighbours going to Kirin. Unceasingly she winnowed the straw threshed yesterday. She had no kerchief to cover her grey hair. Little remained in the winnow and only the stalks and empty husks flew up into the air. Her head and shoulders were covered with the dust.

"Why should you take all that trouble when they have no more grain left?"

"But I might find just a few more grains."

The mother held back her tears and threw what little remained in the winnow into a wooden vessel, which was half-filled with the grains of rice from winnowing. He took a handful of grain and rubbed them between his hands. They were all half-grown, dried up grains; there were few full grains here.

"And how much rice have you got in hand?"

"We did not measure it; we just poured it into the jar."

The mother again filled the winnow with rice stalks and worked it.

He quickly opened the door and went into the kitchen. As he had been here often, he knew where the jars were kept; they were on the earthen bank. He opened the biggest jar first. Though big, it was not big enough to hold a sack of rice. And it was not full. He also opened a small jar beside it. This was filled with sorghum bran, not grain. He looked around, but he could not find any other place where grain was kept. In a cupboard which looked like a kerosene box there were two rice bowls with lids, a few cracked bowls piled up on one another, as well as a blackened pot beside which were scattered some chopsticks and spoons. He opened the lids of the rice bowls. A few spoonfuls of rice remained at the bottom of each of them. Duk Man

or his father would have eaten it in a twinkling, but they had left it over for lunch.

He had an ache in his nose and his eyes blurred. What are those two men going to support their big bodies with, he wondered. And what will be left for the mother to eat—how is she going to survive? There is a saying, "The skirt strings are food." Was she going to live by tightening her skirt strings?

His heart ached at the thought of his mother in Fusung. He could almost see his mother and feel her presence in this kitchen.

As he came out he found Duk Man's mother sobbing, sitting on the straw refuse, instead of winnowing.

"Don't cry, mother. I think there will be a way out."

"I'm not worrying about my living, I am too grateful for your kindly care...."

The mother could not finish her sentence and wiped the tears with the hem of her skirt. But the more she wiped, the more tears flowed down. A while later, she took the winnow with shaking hands that looked like wooden rakes and put straw refuse in it.

He left Duk Man's house, with a sad heart. His plan to leave for Kirin soon gave way. When could I remove these tears of blood and pains and free this good earth from worries? he wondered.

He came to the front of the village, not knowing where he was walking. The wind blew across the bare fields. The earth too seemed to be lying flat and be choked with sobs. There were countless footmarks in the rice fields which were still wet. One of the rice fields was imprinted with tiny footmarks of shoeless children and large ones of grownups.... It seemed that the whole of a family had come out here to carry the rice. His heart contracted at the sight of these marks. There was a similar rice field beyond the paddy lane. Suddenly he recalled his days at Changdok School when he had wandered about the street of Pyongyang with the same aching heart.

It had been in the rainy season. The Tosongrang slum quarters where low-eaved houses stood cheek by jowl was awfully muddy. As he trekked through this roadless place, his nose was assailed by the smell of roasting maize and sweet potatoes as well as the sore smell of smoke. The outskirts of the Tosongrang slum quarters were inhabited by people said to have been kicked out of their houses. They built hovels—they made the walls of straw mats and roofs with grass. Old people were heard coughing

inside these hovels, and the children were stark naked; women had yellow faces, and the grownups brought in something without interruption. Some of them were scraping pieces of wood or driving in stakes. Here the living conditions were still more appalling than in the slum quarters. Their desperate efforts to stay alive were too pitiful to look at. From where and why did they flock to this part of the country in such large numbers? As he was passing a grass-thatched hovel in order to avoid muddy pool, he heard gone children crying. They kept calling mother. In their plaintive cries he seemed to see the images of young ones who were trembling in front of the looming shadow of misfortune. He could not jump over the muddy pool because his feet stuck to the ground. He quickly approached the hovel and peeped in. A small boy and girl were crying themselves hoarse beside their dead mother.

"Mama, I've cooked the gruel. Why don't you move? Look at me, Mama. Open your eyes and look at me." The girl cried, rubbing her cheek against her mother's waxen cheek.

"Don't die, Mama. You mustn't die, you mustn't."

Meanwhile the boy, who seemed to be the younger, shook his mother's shoulder anxiously and buried his tear-stained face in her bosom. The poor woman had met her end on a reed mat spread on the floor. The body moved as the children shook her but remained dumb. The hovel had no door, and drops of water were still falling from the grass ceiling, an aftermath of the last rain. The yard was overgrown with grass, and a black puppy was shambling round, whimpering. There was an oven made of red mud in a corner of the yard, on which a wisp of steam rose from under the lid of a small pot. That must be the gruel the mother had left untouched. How could he turn away? He went into the grass hovel and touched the woman's hand, which was as cold as ice. With difficulty he managed to tear the children away from her, before he covered her face with a piece of threadbare cloth. How could you cover the woman's deep grudge against this world with a piece of tattered cloth? How was it possible to erase the image of the pitiable little boy and girl from her retina by covering her eyes? He felt as if this tiny grass hovel was filled with all the world's misfortunes. As if weighed down by this, they forgot to cry and stared up blankly, sitting side by side. As he looked at the girl's haggard rough face and the boy's face stained with the tears, he felt his heart contract.

"Have you no father, child?" he asked, because there was no trace of any grownup in this hovel.

The girl stared up suspiciously for a while before she replied.

"Father went out to work."

"Then you must go and let him know this quickly, mustn't you?"

"I am afraid of the taskmasters."

"Taskmasters?"

"There are a lot of them on the work site. We came here because the Japs pulled our house down."

"The Japs pulled your house down?"

"Yes, and they beat mama."

"Then, she died because she was beaten?"

"She was hungry and sick and she is dead because they beat her." The girl shot a quick glance. He gritted his teeth. This was too terrible.

"Let us go and find your papa."

"Where do you live, Brother?"

"I live in Mangyongdae. Let's go to your papa quickly."

At this moment some women began to gather near the hovel, and all of them burst out sobbing, grinding their teeth in anger. He found out from them, that on the day a Japanese capitalist had come to look at the site for a factory, the girl's mother was severely beaten by Jap taskmasters for trying to stop them from pulling down her house.

"She had been sick in bed. And they beat and kicked her so hard that she died. How could we avenge her? Oh, sister, you have closed eyes now, without venting your anger. Now forget and sleep in peace...." A woman said this, lifting the piece of cloth to look at the dead woman, in sorrow but with anger. Comrade Kum Song was so angry that he did not know how he had got up that hill near the slums.

"Let's go quickly!" he said and went down the slope, firmly holding the girl's hand.

When he arrived at the factory building site, he found rails crisscrossing the whole area where huge buildings were soaring up. People were scattered all over the place. Japanese taskmasters in *happi* (their native working liveries—Tr.) were shouting angrily here and there. Trucks ran along the rail and pairs of workers staggered under large quarried stones roped to their shoulder poles. Cement was mixed on the ground as well as

high up on the scaffolds by concrete mixers who made a lot of noise dragging around iron sheets. The whole site was panting in oppressive chaos, with the voices of shoulder-pole carriers, the sounds of metal on metal and tense and angry shouts. In a corner some houses were being knocked down. The Japs levelled down one village after another. Amid clouds of dust they tore down the roofs and smashed through crumbling mud walls. Sometimes they hit the rafters to rip them off larger nails.

On the stream there were blackened stones with cooking pots on them and household things piled up in many places—clothes chests, earthenware, bundles of quilts, worn-out boxes and jars—poverty had lost its way and burst out of the old houses. Every face betrayed anger. These people had not yet found even temporary shelter, and the hot sun beat down on them. An old woman whose hair looked like the roots of a green onion was fanning the fire in a make-shift stone fireplace with a pot on it. Her hair and back were white with ash. What could be in that blue pot? There were also many people leaving the place. Some carried their things in ox-carts and the others on A-frame carriers, the women carrying their loads on their heads. The road was crowded with people, and a long string of them kept moving endlessly away. Nobody laughed or cried.

The girl's father was nowhere to be found. They went to a place where there were many push-carts, where sticks of dynamite were being exploded. The girl was so frightened of the growling taskmasters that she stayed very close to Comrade Kum Song and would not let go of his hand.

"Don't be frightened, child. To which country do you belong?"

The little girl stared up blankly, wondering why he asked such a question all of a sudden. And she stole glances slyly—her eyes showed a great sorrow and extreme suspicion.

"To which country do you belong? Answer."

"I am a Korean, of course."

"Yes, you are; you are a Korean...so you mustn't worry. This is our country."

Why did he ask such questions and say such things? Probably it was himself that he was asking and to whom he made that affirmation.

Comrade Kum Song went on a little way and found a long deep trench, the bottom of which was flooded. Two motors were running to pump out the water. There was a long line of workers

all stripped to the waist. It reminded of some mythical inferno. The water did not recede though it was being pumped out continuously, and the workers kept working in the water. In order that the earth was dug out of the trench it had to pass three stages and workers with bare torsos were also working on the slope. The earth kept slipping down, like red bean gruel and the workers dug it up again.

This is where the girl looked for her father. She called "Papa", and all workers in the pool of mud looked up. All had unkempt hair and pitch-black faces; the sweat streaming down their faces and backs, which glittered in the sun. One of them came towards the girl, splashing through the water. He had broad shoulders and a thick chest but you could not tell how old he was. Suddenly he stopped.

"Mama is dead, Papa..." the sentence turned into a wail. The father made no reply; his face darkened and he only looked up. He got out of the water and climbed up the slippery slope. The workers at the top stretched out their hands to pull him up. Reaching the top of the slope, he shot a glance at his daughter with his blood-shot eyes and then squatted down on a heap of earth. Sweat flowed down his face and back.

"Don't cry; you won't bring Mama back to life by crying," the father mumbled, with a sigh. The girl went on sobbing, stamping her feet.

"Aren't you sorry for Mama?"

"I'm sorry for her; she clung so hard to life..." the girl's father blinked his eyes. Beads of water rolled down through his bushy moustache, you could not tell if it was sweat or tears. From the top of the opposite slope, a Japanese taskmaster wearing a fancy cap yelled at him in clumsy Korean, asking him why he had stopped working. The girl's father pretended not to hear him, trying to soothe his daughter.

"Go home. I'll come as soon as the bell rings."

Now the father rose to his feet from the heap of earth. He staggered as if drunken and slipped down the slope step by step. The girl sat down on the top of the slope under the broiling sun, obviously to wait for the bell to ring.

"Go, Brother. I thank you very much."

"I will. But how can you wait here?"

"That's all right."

He did not know what to say to this smart girl before parting. It was lucky that he remembered at this very agonizing moment

that he had two coins which he had intended to spend on a book. When he gave her the money soaked with his grandfather's sweat, the girl clung to him and cried. He wanted to cry with her. Why do I have so little to give her, he thought, regretfully. Can't I give something bigger, something more substantial to the girl, to her father? He did not feel like parting with the girl. He could not face going home. So he went into the town as his feet would carry him. He tried to soothe his aching heart, wandering about the streets of Pyongyang. Walking along the Japanese-looking street and the Taedong-gang River lined with green willows, he had thought and thought of the pitiable people, controlling his anger; the girl who cried with the two coins clutched in her hand, the workers in the black trench, the crowds of people leaving who had all been robbed of their homes.

Japanese robbers trampling our people into the ground!

Were it not for the Japanese imperialist robbers, those peasants from Changtou Village would have not been forced to come over to this strange land and suffer such great hardships. Are the five thousand years, is the history of my country and people going to end this way? Must our line die out? Ah, I have so many indelible memories! The little pigtail, the ridiculously short skirt, and such shrewd eyes. Oh, my girl, where could you be now, longing for your mother, looking up at the sky, your brother's hand in yours?

Next day he left Changtou Village feeling very gloomy; he felt as if he was leaving something wailing, clinging to his sleeve. A flock of crows fluttered up from the bare field. Why do those crows fly around in the gloomy sky and caw? Are they, too, lamenting over a land covered with tears and blood?

As he turned into his street in Kirin, the little girls called out, "Uncle!" rushing towards him. Bong Suk and the twin sisters came running, each wanting to be the first to get to him. Afraid that the twins would go there first, Bong Suk put off her shoes and holding them in each of her hands ran, with her arms spread out like wings.

"Uncle," the children called. He opened his arms to Bong Suk, as she ran into his embrace.

"Uncle!"

"Yes."

His eyes were brimming with tears.

"Uncle! I dug up a yam and ate it."

"That's why your mouth is so dirty, eh?"

"Yes. He he he."

Bong Suk spread her palms for him to look. They were covered with dirt. The twins stamped their feet, asking him to put down Bong Suk and pick them up instead.

"No. This is my uncle," Bong Suk shouted to the twin sisters, looking hard at them.

"No, no. He is our uncle."

"Then, I will hug you both."

He held Bong Suk in one arm and both Son Dong and In Dong in the other and rose to his feet. They were so happy and laughed merrily in his embrace.

"Look at you. You two are dirty all over. Let me wipe your mouths first, and then I'll give you a hug." He put down the girls, pulled out his handkerchief and wiped In Dong's mouth first. Now In Dong grinned at Bong Suk; she was proud because the uncle wiped her first. He wiped Son Dong and Bong Suk's mouths, too.

"Why are you holding your shoes like that?"

"Worn out." Bong Suk nodded her head sagely.

He persuaded her to let him look at her shoes. The soles were worn down and the side was frayed. He put the shoes back on her feet. He held up the tip of one of her feet. All the toes came out through the sole. The other shoe was the same. Her soft toes were all bruised. He checked the feet of Son Dong and In Dong, too. Their canvas shoes were just as badly worn. In Dong's small toe stuck out at the side.

"Let's go."

He walked toward Niumahang Street from which he had come, holding Bong Suk's hand with one hand and both the twins' with the other.

"Where are we going, Uncle?" asked Bong Suk after a while, looking up; she was anxious to know the destination.

"We go to the shop over there."

"Why?"

"To play."

"We don't play at the shop."

"I want to show you the shop."

Bong Suk was delighted, and walked quickly. The twins were also happy and ran. They held his hand, shoving each other's shoulders; Son Dong looked angrily at In Dong, saying that she had snatched his hand from her, and In Dong, scowled back, saying that her sister tried to keep his hand to herself.

Presently he came to a rubber-shoe shop and bought three pairs of rubber shoes. The children were in the ecstasy of joy, clapping their hands.

"Now put these on." He took the worn-out shoes off the girls' feet, and put a new pair on each child. He pressed the tips of the shoes and touched their heels and ankles to check if they were big enough. He checked very carefully.

"Yours don't fit, Son Dong. Take them off."

"Yes, they fit."

Son Dong was afraid she might lose her new shoes and tried to run away.

"Don't behave like that, Son Dong."

"They fit...."

He laughed aloud and grabbed the running girl. Then he hugged her and took the shoes off her, though she stamped, saying she would not take them off.

"Look, girl, here is another pair. You think there are no shoes to fit you?"

"Would you please help her to put them on?" Comrade Kum Song asked the proprietor of the shop, grasping the legs of the struggling Son Dong.

The proprietor brought another pair of rubber shoes and put them on Son Dong.

"Here you are; that's better, isn't it?"

Son Dong stood up, mopping up a few tears that were about to trickle down from her eyes. Comrade Kum Song checked the new pair of shoes for fit. They looked a bit big and he pressed the tips of the shoes several times.

"Good; they fit well."

Suddenly he recalled the rough feet of Duk Man's mother who had squatted on the straw refuse: the cracked tops of her feet which looked like the back of a tortoise, on which the tears had dropped. As he thought of this, he felt a greater pain at heart. I don't think she has ever worn rubber shoes. What would her size be? He wondered and thought of his mother's size. That should fit her.

"Would you give me another pair of rubber shoes with tilted tips?"

He took quite a long time choosing a pair. He wanted to buy one with durable soles and sides.

"Whose shoes are those, Uncle?" asked Bong Suk.

"These are for a mother in the countryside."

"Mother in the countryside?"

"Yes."

"Aren't you buying any for yourself?"

"I will later."

"Why later? yours are so worn out," said Bong Suk stroking his shoes.

"You have no money to buy yours?" asked Son Dong.

"I have."

"Then buy yours."

The children chattered over his shoes. He did not pay any attention to them and finally bought a pair for Duk Man's mother. He was going to take ten *won* out of his pocket to pay for the shoes, when he felt a lump rise in his throat for another reason. How pleased Mother will be when she hears how the money was spent! The faces of Mother in Fusung and Duk Man's mother appeared alternatively before his eyes.

Comrade Kum Song came out of the shop, carrying the three old pairs of children's shoes and Duk Man's mother's rubber shoes. The children in their new shoes flew down the street as if on wings. The tears welled up in his eyes. The two small coins and rubber shoes—something tore at his heart. You have so little to give to people in this land of sorrow. He walked on, looking at the running children with moist eyes.

CHAPTER XI

THE THRONE OF PINE KINGDOM

1

One day, Wol Pa and Chang Yun Sam, who had escaped the wholesale arrest at Lungching, turned up in a carriage at Choe Gon's lodging house. Cho Chang Jin had met them in the street and helped Wol Pa to get down, for Wol Pa was very thin, as if he had been seriously ill. Wol Pa stood still, holding his walking stick in his shaking hand. Comrade Kum Song's old landlady from across the road came out quickly and said a few kind words. Wol Pa did not reply but Chang Yun Sam raised his hat to greet her.

"Hello, grandma, how are you?"

"My goodness, is that really you Mr. Chang?"

Chang Yun Sam smiled sadly and said that he was indeed back in Kirin.

"But where is your daughter?"

"I've left her behind at the Peninsula Inn."

"Tut, tut. It must be very hard for her without mother. But why do you both look so tired?"

"We've had a long journey." Now Wol Pa spoke, though with an effort.

"So you have come back from Seoul, Mr. Wol Pa, I heard that you had gone to Seoul."

"I have been to both Seoul and Chientao," Wol Pa said.

"Why, then, you must have run into those troubles in Chientao."

"Ho, ho, ho. You too heard about it, eh?" said Chang Yun Sam.

"Everybody knows about it. The newspapers made a terrific fuss. Oh, you travel around a lot, like arrows.... And what happened to Mr. Choe Gon?"

"He was arrested by the Japs."

"My goodness! Those cursed swine.... Why should so many Koreans be arrested like that?" The old woman said, as she carried their bags into the house. The metal rings were missing from the handle on Wol Pa's brief case and it bulged as if it might burst any moment now; Chang Yun Sam's brief case was a trifle newer.

Cho Chang Jin supported Wol Pa into the room.

"Don't grip my arm so hard."

"I was afraid that you might fall, sir."

"How could I, when I have my stick...."

Wol Pa shook his arm loose and glared at him with blood-shot eyes. Cho Chang Jin thought Wol Pa must be irritated by something. Cho Chang Jin was disillusioned. The arrest of Choe Gon and his comrades at Chientao had been a blow, but seeing Wol Pa as he was today was utterly appalling. Cho Chang Jin decided that it wasn't much use to rely on these people to achieve revolution in Korea. Clearly the new communist forces that were moving ahead so vigorously under Comrade Kum Song's leadership must have been justified in their criticism of Wol Pa and Choe Gon. Cho Chang Jin had worried about this for many days, and now he felt thoroughly dejected.

"Give me a pillow, would you?" Wol Pa held out his hand to Cho Chang Jin. Cho Chang Jin went to the closet and fetched one. The old woman went out saying Wol Pa mustn't lie down on the floor because it was unheated. She then called the landlady in a voice as loud as a man's.

"There doesn't seem to be anyone at home; maybe they went to the wharf," the old woman muttered as she went away. Wol Pa laid his head on the pillow. But then abruptly he sat up saying, "Look, let us talk a bit," and he stared at Chang Yun Sam with flashing eyes.

"So, you do not think that they are Ploudonists, that they are scoundrels in the grip of petit bourgeois illusions? Why then do they oppose the campaign to abolish farm rents? And when, pray, do they think that they can start a socialist revolution? Hum?" Wol Pa spoke excitedly.

Chang Yun Sam lit a cigarette and held his peace.

"Needless to say, there are good reasons for proposing this campaign. In this critical situation how can we sit and wait for socialism? Do you mean that we should leave such a campaign until it happens of its own accord, rather than consciously

stepping it up?"

Wol Pa got more and more excited. He had been arguing so hotly on the way here that there were dried froth marks at the corners of his mouth like reed blossoms.

At the last meeting in Lungching Wol Pa had raised the question of abolishing peasant rents. But he had dual motives for his proposal. He did, indeed, want to start a socialist revolution in a hurry as he said, but his other, a stronger motive was to take the wind out of the "Koryo Communist Youth League's" sails.

The "Koryo Communist Youth League" had come over from the Soviet Maritime Province; it had gained influence here and had joined up with the "General Bureau of the Korean Communist Party in Manchuria", a group that had been making frantic efforts to gain control. It had its foothold among those who had been through middle school, teachers and in general the intellectuals of the upper middle class. So in the rural areas for the most part their following was among the richer peasants and the landlords, the very people who would be under attack if farm rents were to be abolished. Inevitably, the Tuesday group had strongly supported Wol Pa's proposal, while the KCYL said that the farm-rent question must be shelved supporting this view by pointing out that too much attention to peasant problems was a *Narodnik* policy—had it not been the *Narodniks* who had seen the peasants' *Obshina* as embryonic communism?

"How ridiculous they are! What *Narodnik* policy? Are they going to oppose the youth movement to the communist movement? Comrade Chang, I think you should stand a bit firm. And why, pray, should we not fight for control? When the destiny of the revolution is at stake? And how do you think the socialist movement would fare if power were handed to those KCYL ignoramuses?"

"Let us stop this discussion for now."

"Stop? Why stop? Come on, tell me."

"Well, after all what is the use of gaining control? Do you think we can bring about a socialist revolution? We have been shouting revolution all this time, but what have we achieved?" said Chang Yun Sam, getting angry.

"You mean that you are through with it?"

"Yes. I am disgusted with the lot of you. Your scramble for power has wasted away my youth, and it has bruised my heart which once was filled with revolutionary fervour. I even lost

my wife.

"And now my hair is turning grey and all that you have left of Chang Yun Sam, is a young daughter and a brief case full of bundles of manuscripts. And my daughter I left in a hotel all by herself to follow you wherever you went. Surely that's enough, yet you still harass me. Do you think that if you really do manage to grab control, you can clear the ashes of disillusion from my heart?"

Chang Yun Sam shouted this so furiously, that Wol Pa, completely overwhelmed, sat there with quivering lips. But he pulled himself together and, with a sardonic smile, said waspishly.

"Well, well, well, Comrade Chang, so you think that you can cover up your petit-bourgeois outlook with such cheap heroics?"

As he spoke these words, he straightened up, and staring hard at Chang Yun Sam's face, he moved on to make remarks, which cut Chang to the quick.

"Let's see, what have you really done, then, for the revolution? Written articles. Oh yes, cheap articles that caused confusion in our movement. And what else? Is your dead wife so important, then, your daughter staying at a hotel? Do you want us all to put aside the revolution while we sit lamenting at your dead wife's grave? You're unfit for revolution, Chang. Let me tell you this: Wol Pa has no wife to die or daughter to put in a hotel."

"Oh, Mr. Wol Pa, why do you have to hurt me so?" Chang Yun Sam wailed.

"Shut up. Listen and stop wailing. You, like the ignoramuses of the KCYL are opposing the abolition of farm rent. So you, too, are afraid of revolution. And when we tackle you about your cowardice, you fly off the handle and then have the cheek to brag about your great sacrifices—you, the great champion of the proletariat...."

Neither of them was in a fit state any longer to talk things over. Both were profoundly sorry for something they had not been able to achieve or been wrongfully deprived of; they were humbled and humiliated and filled with a destructive spirit, trying to gain comfort from hurting each other. And this added fuel to the fire.

They kept shouting at each other and banging the floor.

Wol Pa was more excited than Chang Yun Sam, spitting out rough words.

At this moment Comrade Kum Song heard the shouting on his way to his lodgings and walked into the yard.

"Why are you lighting a fire at this house, grandma?"

"Mr. Wol Pa has come back from Chientao. So I dropped round. The floor is very cold so I am lighting a fire. But I don't know why they fight like that. Like a pair of fighting cocks that fight whenever they meet, bristling their feather on their necks and trembling all over...." The old woman grumbled and clicked her tongue.

He stopped briefly to listen to their loud voices. The abolition of farm rents had come up again. Wol Pa shouted at Chang Yun Sam that his action was perfidious, that he was playing into the hands of the KCYL.

Comrade Kum Song turned away, but, on second thoughts, he stopped. He felt he must go in and have a go at them. Why do they shout and hit the floor like that, he wondered. What can they offer to the Korean revolution, when they are stuck in the mire of factional strife? I must show up their empty talk to stop them harming the revolution. How could they have confused the Korean communist movement so? It was because of their kind, that people like Paek Rak Jin had misunderstood socialism.

With these thoughts Comrade Kum Song went in to them. The two men had faces as red as boiled lobsters. Cho Chang Jin, sitting in the corner, stood up to greet him. Comrade Kum Song told Wol Pa that he must have had a hard journey. Wol Pa replied it had not been hard at all, and hastily offered him a seat. He lit a cigarette and stole an angry look at Chang Yun Sam. He was in such a mood that he might give way to a tirade of violent words at any moment. Chang Yun Sam puffed at a cigarette, the veins standing out of his long neck.

"They say an unhappy thing happened in Chientao, and you were fortunate to escape."

"It was indeed appalling. But where they are good at arresting, we are good at escaping. Quite a few of us were arrested but several escaped." Wol Pa replied, the lines on his face fading slightly.

"What happened to Mr. Choe Gon?"

"Arrested. As he was climbing over the mud wall, he was

shot at and got caught. But you have come here at the right moment. I would like to discuss something with you, Comrade President." Wol Pa suddenly looked grave as he said this.

"What's the problem?"

"At the meeting in Lungching, the peasant question, namely, the question of abolishing farm rent was raised as an urgent problem. Some time ago, we had a debate on the present stage of the Korean revolution, and, Comrade President, I made some studies later and found that your argument contained many points on which I agree. Indeed, our country is a colonial, semi-feudal society and more than 80 per cent of the population are peasants. Therefore, I think, we cannot but attach great importance to the peasant question. So we boldly raised the question of abolishing farm rent. But you know what those ignorant people of the KCYL claim? They say ours is the *Narodnik* view. I was dumbfounded—this kind of people are swaggering about as socialists.... So I have been debating it hotly with Comrade Chang Yun Sam."

"That is a very interesting question. Well, what is your view, Mr. Chang Yun Sam?" Comrade Kum Song looked smilingly at Chang Yun Sam who sat there with his back against a wall.

"You'd better not touch him. He's pretty angry now, and thoroughly fed up with the whole lot—land questions, farm rent and everything."

Chang Yun Sam looked hard at Wol Pa and blew out a cloud of smoke.

Comrade Kum Song had already seen through the absurdity of the case. Wol Pa and his colleagues had had disastrous influence on the communist movement, shouting their hyper-revolutionary slogans, not taking the actual conditions into account at all. At present young people were either antagonistic to or discouraged at the reality full of conflicts, and they had a strong urge to hit out at random or be killed themselves. So, prattling such extremities was tantamount to throwing oil at a red-hot iron—it would cause a conflagration or terrific explosion. This anarchistic spasm would alienate the masses from the revolution, and worse, it could provide a pretext for a reactionary offensive, and give the enemy good opportunities to slander us, eating away at the youngsters' healthy reason. The revolutionary atmosphere was on the rise now, and both Wol Pa and his people and the KCYL were seeking to take advantage of this

to gain a foothold and expand their influence. Comrade Kum Song knew this only too well, and knew, too, that he must pull them down. And today they were making this ridiculous attempt to probe his attitude, so he could not leave them alone.

"But, Mr. Wol Pa, why are you raising the farm rent problem today? Of course, the land question is fundamental to the anti-feudal revolution; it is also a problem that really concerns an ally of the working class. Therefore, the land or peasant question must, for Marxist-Leninists, be a strategic problem. Once it is solved, the farm rent question will of course also be solved, will it not?"

"That's right. I'm not going to deny that. Lenin attached great importance to the land question. And how much our peasants are suffering from this plunderous rent in kind? Therefore, I propose we crush the cursed rent system immediately and throw it into the trash can of history."

Wol Pa lit a cigarette with a hand still trembling from the furious quarrel with Chang Yun Sam, and maybe also because he already regretted raising this issue with Comrade Kum Song whose arguments were always flawless and he was feeling slightly overawed.

"That's very challenging. We must abolish not only rent but land ownership, indeed, all the private ownership of the means of production; we must root out the whole feudal and capitalist structure. But simply advocating it is little use; we have to put this into practice by our own efforts. So, while our highest program is to build a communist society, we must envisage several stages in the revolution in order to achieve that goal."

"Comrade President, Comrade Wol Pa is not proposing to include the abolition of farm rent in a program; he is claiming that the whole countryside should rise in revolt right now, and that is simply not feasible," interposed Chang Yun Sam who had been smoking away with an angry face. He could not remain silent because Wol Pa was behaving too ridiculously; he was clamouring as if he had some solid argument of his own, trying to cover up his real intention which was to break down KCYL influence.

"Unfeasible? How so? Why is it not feasible to abolish farm rent? You are betraying the revolution. Betraying socialism!"

Wol Pa attacked Chang Yun Sam, banging the floor with his fist. Again he foamed at the mouth. He continued heatedly:

"You mean we have to wait with our arms folded for

socialism to come? I don't want to be that passive. You must know that socialism will be achieved by using positive slogans to the peasants and launching a practical campaign to abolish farm rent." Wol Pa rubbed the sweat with his handkerchief.

"Ho, ho, ho. Don't get so excited, Mr. Wol Pa. I know that there are many others who also advocate abolishing farm rents apart from you. The question is not advocating the idea, but whether they actually want it abolished. I would like to ask you a question: If farm rent were abolished, what would the landlords live on?"

Wol Pa was goggle-eyed and said: "Why ask me such a thing? Do you think I, a socialist, should worry about how the landlords will live?"

"Yes indeed. Not that we need to worry about what landlords live on, for, on the contrary, we advocate the elimination of landlords as a class. But, Mr. Wol Pa, your proposal to abolish farm rents leads me to think that it is only farm rent you intend to abolish, that you would still tolerate the existence of the landlord system, feudal land ownership, that is allowing them to keep the land from which they extracted rents—is that it?"

"Ha ha ha," Chang Yun Sam laughed boisterously. Wol Pa's face turned pale. Cho Chang Jin also changed colour. He was confused into thinking that it was not Wol Pa but he himself who had begun to be driven into a tight corner in debate. He had regarded Wol Pa as a great theoretician in the Korean communist movement, but it seemed that the absurdity of his theory had been laid bare now and somehow he got all mixed up. He had a premonition that Comrade Kum Song's flawless theory would bring Wol Pa's shallow theorising to a dead end. He even felt uneasy. However, with an effort, Wol Pa recovered and cried out: "What do you mean by that? I never suggested that the landlords should be left alone. I have been quite emphatic, more so than anybody, that the landlords must be eradicated completely. So, do you mean I have not called for socialist revolution? I am the one who claims that we must move ahead to socialism right away."

"I know it well. But why is it that you who advocate immediate socialist revolution pull out the abolition of farm rent as a separate item?"

"That's an immediate slogan."

"Now everything is clear," returned Comrade Kum Song, and with a rather serious look, continued.

"In my opinion, the people of the KCYL will not accept your slogan because the class in which they have a foothold lives on farm rents and because you belong to a different group from theirs. In a word, they fear to lose their influence in the communist movement. But, Mr. Wol Pa, your case, which seems revolutionary on the surface, is just as harmful as the KCYL's. Raising the abolition of farm rent as an immediate slogan is not timely, it is reckless. In order to end feudal socio-class relations for good, we need slogans against the Japanese imperialists who back the landlord system and at the same time hit out at those landlords who collaborate with the Japs. Unless we overthrow the Japanese imperialists, it is impossible to eliminate the landlord system, and if we want to stamp out the landlord system, we must first strike at Japanese imperialism. Unless we are prepared to fight a decisive battle against the Japanese and the landlord system itself, abolishing farm rents is a mere absurdity, something that cannot be raised at all. It is impossible to see your proposal as based on any real desire to abolish farm rent. Through struggles for tenants' rights and for the reduction of taxes, we must gradually lead the peasants to class awareness, get them to unite, and gradually expand local struggles and organise them on a nationwide scale, to move ahead from economic to political struggle. Having accumulated forces and experience, we can then move on into battle."

"Isn't your view too passive, Comrade President? If we abolish farm rent right out, it is revolution; a struggle to get taxes cut is not."

"Mr. Wol Pa, you consider my opinion is passive, but I am afraid you just don't see the difference between revolution and passivity. I think this is the very reason why you always make extremist, radical demands. Marxist-Leninists advocate a revolutionary transformation of society, but they know that this cannot be achieved overnight through the subjective desire of theoreticians. The revolutionary forces that will undertake the task must be prepared and the historical and social conditions must be right. Mr. Wol Pa, however much you want a revolution, you cannot get rid of a single landlord by yourself. That is why both Marx and Lenin made preparations to build up revolutionary forces and tempered the working class through various forms of legal and illegal struggle. We regard this as a preparatory course for the decisive moment of the revolution, not as a passive method. That is why we advocate the final and complete

extermination of Japanese imperialism, of the landlord and comprador capitalist classes, while at the same time we admit the necessity of economic struggles such as for the eight-hour day or for wage increases. We also deem it necessary to guarantee sound Marxist-Leninist leadership to politicise the struggles; and we consider that while calling pointblank for the overthrow of Japanese imperialism and the landlords, the main target of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolutionary struggle, we must raise sharper political slogans for tenant disputes. Mr. Wol Pa, if I remember correctly, you too admit the necessity of factory workers' strikes aimed at better living conditions. If you are demanding an immediate socialist revolution, don't you think it is passive to demand an eight-hour day and higher wages from the capitalists? Are you asking the working class, the leading class of the revolution, to be passive, and telling the peasantry to fight for the immediate abolition of farm rent? Surely you've got your lines crossed somewhere?"

"Your argument is unsound. It is designed to insult me. The essence...the essence lies in revolutionary practice." Wol Pa vociferated, his lips trembling spasmodically. In fact he had little idea of which essence lay in what revolutionary practice. He was too flustered to know what he was talking about. His forehead paled and beads of cold sweat appeared. Chang Yun Sam looked bitterly at Wol Pa who, having been strongly attacked by Comrade Kum Song, was at a loss what to do. Yet he did feel that he too was under attack, for had not he scurried around with Wol Pa and played the big theoretician. He had thought that he was, perhaps in a stronger position than Wol Pa, but now it did not look so good.

Cho Chang Jin, too, was dispirited and sat with a bowed head. He wanted to get up and get out of the room but could not—he felt as if his hands and feet were tied.

"Mr. Wol Pa, you are mistaken if you think you can frighten people with such 'revolutionary' words; you must know that the things have developed to a point that nobody will be persuaded by such an illogical, preposterous theory. And I would like to say a few more words that I have been intending to say to you on some suitable occasion. You say you are fighting for the Korean revolution, but why do you visit the headquarters of the Communist International so often? Are you interested in the revolution or in the Communist International? Last spring too, both your factions visited the Communist International, each

asking to be recognised as the official party, but both came back without that recognition. What do you think about it? And it is said that, coming back, they had a knife-fight near the border. How lamentable!

"The Communist International cannot make a revolution in any country. When any Koreans, whoever they may be, work for revolution, in a responsible manner, studying conditions in Korea and working out a sensible strategy and tactics, of course the International will recognise them, why not? Koreans will start their own revolution in their own country; or should they only do that if somebody abroad recognize them and not if they don't? Mr. Wol Pa, it is high time that you realised how far your factional strife has gone and what your foul dealings have brought to the Korean communist movement. You have got bogged down in an absurd factional fight, and have not realised that time marches on. The Korean communist movement has already set out on a new road to find the right course. It is past the embryonic stage that was stained with the blood of factional strife. And if you don't take a good straight look at these changes, the Korean communist movement will discard you in the dust bin of history."

Wol Pa's mouth was completely frozen. He lighted a cigarette with a hand that shook violently. Chang Yun Sam and Cho Chang Jin's faces also paled. This was the end of it all. This was their miserable defeat.

Comrade Kum Song wanted to go on a bit further, but since the three men looked so cowed, he bade them farewell and left the house.

Chang Yun Sam heaved a long sigh. After all, all these insignificant persons, himself among them, had clamoured for the Korean revolution and socialist revolution at Seoul and Chientao. The Tuesday group had put up this Wol Pa as theoretician and run amuck following ulterior motives. He wished he could bring everybody who had worshipped that hack theoretician here to show them what he looked like now.

Yun Sam picked up his brief case and got to his feet. Out in the street he walked straight ahead feeling as if he were sliding down into an abyss.

Where shall I go? he asked himself. Where should Wol Pa go? And what about me? How can these rotten human beings be redeemed?

Chang Yun Sam stopped walking, thinking about visiting

Kwon Sim. They had been good friends in Seoul. But Kwon Sim had hated factions and since their views were poles apart the two friends had quarrelled, and he had not seen Kwon Sim since he came here. He wanted to see him now, God knows why. But he soon gave up and turned back. He hated himself so much that he no longer liked walking even, because he felt that he was leaving dirty footmarks behind. He dragged his weary legs.

When he arrived at the front of the inn, In Sun, his daughter, was playing housekeeping with a few girls beside the warehouse wall. Chang Yun Sam looked over at them, leaning on his walking stick. His wife had died early and he had had to carry her with him, because there was nobody to take care of her. But he was grateful to his daughter for warming his bleak life, like a lone flower blooming in a windy desert. He pulled out a handkerchief and lightly mopping the corners of his eyes, went into the hotel.

Cho Chang Jin could not get up and for a long while after Chang Yun Sam had gone he remained seated. Wol Pa, whose face had turned dark red suddenly struck the face of the desk with his fist and cried out.

"So, Mr. Cho. What do you think? Do you think the theory aimed against me is correct?"

"I think the theory contains truth."

"You mean you think the theory is justified?"

With bloodshot eyes Wol Pa turned on Cho Chang Jin, his fist clenched.

"Sir, if the theory is not correct, why couldn't you refute it?"

"What's that? God damn you! You dirty renegade! Get out of here this minute!"

"I shall do that without your order. How I hate myself for believing in you as a teacher, for my past illusions."

Cho Chang Jin leapt up and ran out. Wol Pa shouted some words after him banging his desk top. This was simply baffling. He deeply regretted that he had trusted such a man and clamoured and scurried about, claiming that he was in the communist movement.

"I have worshipped that incarnation of political ambition—that sham theoretician like a God; and I was angry when my friends called me 'Wol Pa Junior' because they were defaming Wol Pa's name. I am an idiot—an utter fool.... Oh, how

could I be so stupid."

Cho Chang Jin walked out, not knowing whither he was going. He thought he was going towards the main street but he found himself in an alleyway. The feet in canvas shoes that he did not feel like his own trekked wearily along through the shadow of a wall.

"Comrade Chang Jin!" a voice called.

To his surprise, Cho Chang Jin saw Comrade Kum Song. He was carrying a thick book, he must have just come out of his lodgings.

"Would you do me a favour, Comrade Chang Jin?"

"What is it?" asked Cho Chang Jin flurriedly, his heart thumping against the ribs.

"We are rehearsing a play, I don't know if you heard about it. Comrade Pak Gwang Sik tells me that you are a good actor. Would you perhaps like to play a part?"

"Oh, how could I play a part!"

"Comrade Chang Jin, please do. I understand your suffering. But we must understand ourselves correctly, and that's all. I am sure you will fight well along the true road of the Korean revolution." Comrade Kum Song said, coming nearer and putting his hand on his shoulder.

"Comrade Kum Song..." cried out Cho Chang Jin, raising his tear-filled eyes. He knew why Comrade Kum Song had offered him a part in the play. He was so kind as to teach him and help him to jump out of the faction mire.

"Please do come on over. All the comrades will be very happy to see you."

Cho Chang Jin bowed his head unable to reply; there were tears in his eyes.

Wol Pa seemed to be still fuming; the sound of his fist banging the desk was sounded out through his shouts and curses. He must have been jumping around in a paroxysm of rage.

2

The play prepared by the young people was to be put on at Pastor Li Son Yop's chapel. The day before Comrade Kum Song had visited the Fu Hsing-tai's rice-cleaning mill.

He had invited the elders at the merger conference to the play put on for them by the students. Everybody was delighted and said that they would come. Choe Hwal asked him teasingly how much should they pay for admission and whether there would be any actresses.

When evening set in, the chapel was crowded. None of the nationalist leaders had appeared, but there were members of the Juvenile and Students Associations and also many men and women who had heard about the play. It was a motley crowd—small shop keepers in Niumahang Street, cloth dealers from the large Peifa Street and many others.

Chang Tae Ho and Song Chun Bo were very busy ushering in the guests. They too had made a complete switch-over to socialism under Comrade Kum Song's guidance. Song Chun Bo was particularly active.

Presently Paek Rak Jin and Chong Min Su appeared in the chapel, preceded by old Li Gap Mu. Then came in old Sim Hak, Li Gwang Jin and other "Sinmin-bu" and "Chamui-bu" people. Seats had been reserved for them in the front where bulrush mats were spread out and some ashtrays even. Pastor Li Son Yop's family had brought out a quilt with embroidered chrysanthemums for Li Gap Mu, Paek Rak Jin, Sim Hak and Li Gwang Jin. They took their seats, admiring the curtain hanging in the front.

"In short, drama is art. What is art? Students, do you know what art is?"

Choe Hwal did not sit down; he cracked jokes, looking round at the students. He loved to joke with students. This was the art of winning popularity. The students listened to Choe Hwal and laughed.

Soon Comrade Kum Song appeared on the stage. There was dead silence in the chapel and outside it. He said that on behalf of the youth and students in Kirin he would like to offer greetings to the elders attending the merger conference. And he added that the songs and play to be performed on the stage this evening was a bouquet of flowers devotedly prepared by the students for their elders.

"He speaks so well; excellent, you know," said Li Son Yop.

Behind the stage a choir of girl students were lined up for their turn. They fidgeted as they listened to Comrade Kum Song's speech. Behind them ran a lane where there was a tall poplar, and at the end was a room where Li Son Yop's

youngest daughter studied. This was their temporary dressing room. Here another group of girl students were practising songs or powdering their faces at the mirror.

Pak Gwang Sik, Choe Jin Guk and Cho Chang Jin who were in the play were already in their costumes and making a great fuss, powdering their faces and getting their moustaches drawn. With a huge inkstone at his side Chae Gyong was drawing moustaches and lines on the actors' faces, but the tip of his writing brush quivered as he brought it to the face, so that he would have to withdraw it. He was overcautious, and he hesitated over the moustaches, wondering if he should make the tips tilt or droop.

"Hurry up and get it done. We haven't got that much time...."

"Just a moment. The moustache has got to suit you and it's got to be in character," Chae Gyong said, grinning.

Cho Chang Jin, with a beard made of white hemp threads stalked up and down the room with a grave look. He was not free from confused thoughts. He remembered how strongly he had been under Wol Pa's influence and how now he was here among these good comrades on this significant occasion. Why didn't I join in this pulsating new stream? he wondered. The more he thought about, the more ashamed he felt with regret.

A light bulb had been fixed up under the poplar in the lane for putting the finishing touches on the throne which was part of the stage set; Gi Jun and Sin Dong Ho drove in nails and planed hurriedly pieces of board. This was only one part of the set, but they were working on it with great care as if it had to last for years.

"How long have you worked at the engine depot, Comrade Gi Jun?" asked Sin Dong Ho abruptly, as he put in another nail.

"About five years," returned Gi Jun stretching himself.

"Do they employ anybody at the engine depot?"

"Of course."

"I mean do they use any people?"

"They employ anybody who can work. Anyone wanting a job?"

"Could you help me to get into the engine depot?"

"But you are a student; why do you want to work at the engine depot?"

"What the good of going to school? I must get in the engine depot and earn my living."

"I don't understand you."

"I'm serious. Would you get me a job there?"

As the two were talking, Paek Sun Hui came running into the lane.

"Look, here it is. I got this from Jom Sun's."

Paek Sun Hui was delighted that she had been able to get a piece of yellow silk cloth to cover the throne. Sin Dong Ho spread it out. It was glittering gold.

"If we spread this over the throne, it will look real," Gi Jun said happily, touching the cloth.

The throne was finished now and Paek Sun Hui covered it with the silk, tacking it roughly with needle and cotton.

"Comrade Sun Hui, go in and put your makeup on. Time's getting on..." said Sin Dong Ho.

"I don't need any makeup. I will just go and sing, though I'm not much of a singer. By the way, you must be worrying about your family."

"What's the use of worrying? Somehow or other we must live on," Sin Dong Ho replied in a forlorn voice, looking at Paek Sun Hui's neat hair parted in the middle. And they both stopped talking. The chorus came flowing out onto the stage and there was a lot of applause. They came out noisily, and then a boy student of Middle School No. 5 began his solo. The accompanying violin played the gently sorrowful tune *Nostalgia*.

Sin Dong Ho and Paek Sun Hui listened quietly to the song, leaning against the trunk of the poplar.

As there was not enough time left, Paek Sun Hui went into the dressing room and sat at a mirror and roughly brushed back her hair. She sang the *Milky Way in the Blue Sky* under breath. She wondered why tears blurred her eyes.

The actors, in full costume were noisily rehearsing their lines. Choe Jin Guk was very excited, moving his fist, as if reciting a poem.

The performance was a great success. The nationalists applauded after every song. Choe Hwal laughed moving his body restlessly. Paek Sun Hui, in a black skirt and white jacket, sang to the accompaniment of the organ, which was played by Pastor Li Son Yop's youngest daughter. She skilfully kept Paek Sun Hui's mild and delicate voice alive. The musical world unfolding on the stage led the audience to the Milky Way, up to the

sky.

Hands clapped thunderously, shaking the whole chapel. Paek Rak Jin laughed until his face turned crimson.

"If Sun Gi were here, he would have done his bit," said old Li Gap Mu. Paek Sun Gi was a good singer, indeed. And he danced so well that he gained quite a reputation among the nationalists.

That night a musical tale won a great acclamation, too. The audience hardly stopped applauding.

The play began late at night. Before the curtain rose, the sound of a large brass bowl surprised the people. Somebody beat it for a whole minute. He seemed to be trying to wake up the audience before the show. And to the sound of the brass gong the curtain rose. The stage was empty and from behind the stage the voice of the narrator came.

"...This did not happen thousands of years ago or hundreds of years ago. It happened just a few years ago in a country called Pine Kingdom. Pine Kingdom has beautiful mountains and clear rivers. Neither sun nor moon would ever leave it intoxicated by the superb scenery of this country and the stars alighted on the bushes and turning into fireflies strolled around before going back to their places; and celestial women would turn into cranes, wild geese, crested ibises or kingfishers in order to come down to Pine Kingdom...."

The narrator listed the beauties of Pine Kingdom. In this kingdom crops were reaped 14 times a year and the dew on the grass smelled sweet.

"Utopia dramatized, eh?" students seated in back rows whispered.

The narrator continued.

"Pine Kingdom is a lovely country, but the nation had a sorrowful history. Foreign enemies in border areas used every means to invade Pine Kingdom. At first they used to use bows and spears, but later they invented cannons and tanks for the invasion. The people of this country spilt their blood over the fields and fought to protect the sacred soil of their Pine Kingdom. The sorrowful history stayed on in this kingdom. Only a few years ago the greatest battle ever was waged in Pine Kingdom. Countless people died, so did the king, and the palace and the throne were burnt down. But this catastrophe could not bring the people of Pine Kingdom to their knees. Having beaten off their enemies, the people of Pine Kingdom rose up to

rebuild the country. In order to obtain a golden throne the people collected treasures and sent three ministers to a Sacred Place. Entrusted with this important mission the ministers supervised the work so carefully that in three months and ten days they succeeded in getting a rare throne made that had certain occult powers. The throne for the new ruler of Pine Kingdom was made of 18 tons of pure gold. He who sat on it could see for thousands of miles, and he could go into the sky or down into the earth and had the knowledge of everything in all lands and all ages, and could transform nature as he pleased. So he who would sit on this throne would be the luckiest person in the whole wide world.

"When the news came that the throne was ready the people of Pine Kingdom came out into the streets and craned their necks to see the throne; they were as anxious as you, our audience waiting for the play tonight...."

"Um, so we have become the people of Pine Kingdom, eh? This is a fine plot...." The nationalists mumbled, excited somehow.

"Yes, that Pine Kingdom looks exactly like our own Korea. They have no throne in the palace; and it is made somewhere else, and we are in the same situation, you know. But where will that throne with an occult power come from?" Li Pil Su laughed aloud in a knowing manner.

"Anyhow this is a sort of meaningful play. This is different from common new-school plays." Old Sim Hak said with a grave look, enthralled by the narrator's words.

Amid a general murmur in the audience, there was the sound of a rope untied and the throne floated down from the ceiling.

"That's right. It is said to have a divine power, so it is different from ordinary ones. It is quite original to make the throne fall down from the sky...." So Gun Ha exclaimed in admiration, as he watched the stage.

As the hubbub gradually died away, everybody stared hard at the throne placed comfortably right in the middle of the stage. Its huge seat was wide enough to hold three people. Covered with a yellow silk cloth, it dazzled like a real throne. But it looked very strange; the front legs were extraordinarily high whereas the back legs too short, and the front of the seat was quite wide but the back was very narrow.

"So that is what the three ministers ordered?" spit out Li

Gwang Jin twisting the tips of his tiger-moustache.

"Ho, ho, ho. Is that the throne with a divine power?"

As the people started to murmur, the narrator's voice came flowing out from behind the scene.

"...The throne symbolizes the power of governing the nation, so what is essential is its occult power; one must not be too particular about its shape—the great throne of Pine Kingdom looks very ugly. This was not the will of Providence, but of the ministers. And it is impossible to tell you all about it in a few words...."

Before the narrator finished, the three ministers appeared on the stage in imposing official caps and gowns. Each of them put on airs, walking in a leisurely gait, with his shoulders thrown back, as dignified as any real minister; one of them was uncommonly tall, another fat and the last one very short and thin. Each of them kept his shoulders thrown back to increase his dignity, and the result was very comical.

"So, all of them are the highest ministers; they have the rhinoceros-horn belts on. Ho ho ho. They are dressed excellently." Old Sim Hak exclaimed again and again, and the reticent old Li Gap Mu nodded his head and murmured.

"You can't entrust the task of making the throne to any ministers. Though they are young, the students have prepared everything so logically."

In fact, the students had had considerable difficulties in getting costumes together for this play. Pak Gwang Sik, who played Prince Pak had tied a cushion on his belly and put on a *turumagi* that was rather like a Chinese gown—he had borrowed it from Bo Bae's uncle. He had put on a rhinoceros-horn belt, a paperboard breastplate on his chest and back, on each of which were drawn twin cranes, and also had an official cap made of raw silk. Choe Jin Guk acting as Prince Mun, though actually not very tall, had had his heels heightened and he stretched his neck, to look lanky. And Cho Chang Jin acting as Prince Choe had his face painted dark and made his beard so long that it reached his chest.

With grave looks the three ministers walked around the throne. Whenever they faced the audience with their back against each other's, their eyes glittered like glass balls.

"Since the people are anxiously waiting for this throne to arrive, I think we three should join hands and carry it to the palace as soon as possible." Prince Mun was the first to speak

out in a dignified voice.

"Prince Mun is quite right. Just as the sky must always have the sun, so the country must always have the king's throne. We must not delay the delivery of the throne. We must take a shortcut to go back as quickly as possible." Prince Choe said this, and turned to the left, touching the throne. But Prince Pak shook his head and stepping forward, said.

"What Your Excellencies have said sounds reasonable. But you should know it is not right and proper for us to take a shortcut carrying the throne like merchants. Of course, I don't think Prince Choe proposed to take a shortcut in order to go northwest where his home town is, but we must not take a shortcut. The throne is the place where the king sits, so we must act exactly the same way as when the king is travelling."

"I have always respected Prince Pak's extensive knowledge because he was born into a long-renowned family, but I did not know he would make such an important proposal with regard to a matter vital to the nation. I agree with Prince Pak; we must not take a shortcut when we carry the throne. We must take the main highway just as a king would, and enter the palace through the main gates." Prince Mun said, nodding gravely.

But Prince Pak shook his head again and took a step forward.

"Prince Mun's proposal is one-sided. While entering the palace accompanying the former king on his visits, I often took the road to southwest, where Prince Mun's home town is but there is no rule that the throne must always be carried on the southwest road. This is an extraordinary journey: it is to enthronement a new king. We should, therefore, observe old practice and make sure that there is no mistake."

"Then, where on earth do you intend to go, Prince Pak? You don't mean to go southeast to your home town, do you?" Prince Choe inquired, disgusted.

However, without changing colour, Prince Pak said in a still graver voice.

"Ever since boyhood I have liked to recite the wise teachings of sages and kings and been eager to strictly observe the rules of our forefathers, by studying the history books. Now, in my opinion, the change of kings precisely means the downfall of a dynasty and the rise of a new one; so, historically, wise kings tried to open a new road, instead of taking the road of ruin followed by their predecessors. Looking back over Pine

Kingdom's past, whenever a king's line was cut out, a bastard would be pushed in, nobody knows where he had come from, and put up as a new king. We too must seek a new road to enthrone a new king; but, in order that the nation may prosper and the people live in peace, we must choose the road which shows with a lucky omen. Now on the road leading to the back gate of the palace the landscape is so beautiful and full of royal spirits that from olden times fortune-tellers and old people have foretold that a new king will take this road; and of late rumour has it that at every dawn a bright glow comes from the direction of the back gate of the palace and a giraffe cries three times. Therefore, I believe that we must carry the throne along that road."

Before Prince Pak had finished, Prince Choe looked up at the sky and lamented, saying: "Alas! Those who are called the pillars of the nation pretend to be loyal, but they always insist that the dog's paw is mutton. And whither this throne...."

Not a breath was heard among the audience. The nationalists were absorbed in listening to the conversation among the three ministers about the nation's destiny. They had not yet grasped the meaning of the play.

"I think Prince Mun is reasonable there. But Prince Pak seems to be hatching some plot."

As Li Pil Su said this, So Gun Ha snorted, returning: "Prince Choe seems to be right in proposing to go quickly. I can't hear them well, but I'm afraid all three have some sinister intentions."

Meanwhile, the frivolous Choe Hwal commented in a knowing manner. "That Prince Choe plays well. An actor must play like that if he is to be popular. He acts seriously enough to move one to tears."

Behind the scene a Wenkuang Middle School student was prompting in an undertone, while Chae Gyong stood at his side, flashing his torch at the book. For a long time the three ministers insisted on their respective proposals. But they were exhausted by their debate, and finally agreed to go in any direction, and rose to their feet, throwing silk ribbons tied to the throne across their shoulders. When the ribbons, several arms' span long, were stretched taut, the throne went up and floated in the air. But it remained there in the air, without moving in any direction. The three men pulled the ribbons in different directions—Prince Mun moving southwest where his

home town was, Prince Pak southeast and Prince Choe northwest. Each used all his strength to pull the ribbon, stretching out one of his legs, but the throne spun round and round on the same spot. Each defeated by his own strength, they began to pant. The most pitiable of them all was the skinny Prince Choe played by Cho Chang Jin. He staggered back every time the other two stronger men pulled their ribbons. And yet, he pulled desperately, now turning around, rooting his legs on the ground, so as not to be beaten. In the end beads of perspiration streamed down the three men's foreheads and their chests started to heave like bellows.

"I am afraid we shall be out of breath. Let us have a rest."

As soon as Prince Pak proposed, the three threw their ribbons away simultaneously and sat down in a heap. They fanned themselves with their hands, but as soon as they had recovered their breath, they began to argue on a different aspect.

"The throne looks right for a tall man," mumbled the tall Prince Mun as if to himself. Then the small and thin Prince Choe jerked his head and spit out.

"Don't be so absurd. I believe a slender noble man fits that throne. Look at the narrow back."

"You can only see the back and cannot see the high legs? Fundamentally speaking, the throne is the seat for the king who governs the nation. Therefore, it should be occupied by a tall man who is capable of looking down at the world at a glance. How can a small man maintain the nation's dignity?"

"Oh, no. You are quite wrong," cried out Prince Pak who had been staring fiercely. "A tall man is a bore; he has no royal dignity about him. From the shape of this throne you will realize that an uncommonly heavy and imposing person should sit on it; throughout all ages kings have been of heavy build. So don't talk nonsense."

Now, Prince Choe distorted his mouth and laughed aloud. "Whenever you open your mouths, Your Excellencies quote the sayings of saints and sages, but you have not yet understood the fundamental principle of being a king. From time immemorial, the king governed the people with virtue. Government by force is nothing but oppression. Therefore, the king regards as his principle being circumspect in his behaviour and perfecting his moral excellence by hiding himself as far as possible. So, who is entitled to the throne? We must know that at the Sacred Place, we secured the throne with this narrow back, which means that

Providence orders us to have a king with sublime virtue and of small build."

Prince Choe's aggressive statement got the audience laughing.

"He is eloquent," said Li Son Yop, laughing.

"Um, that is why the throne is so distorted. The play was meaningfully prepared." Chong Min Su muttered with a serious look.

All the nationalists were carried away by the play. Smoking one cigarette after another, old Li Gap Mu and Sim Hak turned their ears to the stage so as not to miss a word. Li Gwang Jin's mouth under the tiger-moustache was slightly open. If such a throne with occult powers existed in this world and, if he could become the supreme ruler once he sat on that seat, he would like very much to sit on it though uncomfortable, cutting the throats of all those princes with his sword.

Meanwhile, in the dressing room, Comrade Kum Song was talking with Sin Dong Ho.

"Have you finished the *Communist Manifesto* yet?"

"I have. But I do not understand it very well..." replied Sin Dong Ho.

"If you do not understand it, you must read it again and again. If you have any questions let us discuss them. You know yourself that it is never easy task to grasp truth, Comrade Sin?"

Sin Dong Ho had read a number of books brought him by Comrade Kum Song. He was unboundedly grateful to him for his efforts to awaken him. And he thought if he was not absolutely sincere, he would not be a man.

"But I am afraid, Comrade Sin, you have not really pulled yourself together yet. Only Marxism can show you the essence of the contradictions in this society which you are indignant at. Further, you will learn how to deal with these contradictions.... If you don't know this and just get indignant and desperate, remember it won't do simply to swim with the tide. That is not the way to live. First you must study Marxism thoroughly and get your ideas straight. That is essential for you now. Then the road will be open before you and you will see the goal clearly. Otherwise, however great courage, you will end up beating your fists against the wall."

Sin Dong Ho listened in silence.

Gyong Ju came in and announced that the play would be a tremendous success.

"Let's go and see the play," urged Comrade Kum Song, shaking Sin Dong Ho's shoulder and helping him up.

Comrade Kum Song did not mention what he had been told by Gi Jun; he had just checked what was behind Sin Dong Ho's request to Gi Jun.

In order to enable Sin Dong Ho to put his laudable intention into practice, Comrade Kum Song thought that he would have to rid him of his resistance to life and guide him to truly revolutionary ideas.

At present on the stage, each of the three ministers was racking his brains for a way to leave the other two behind while he carried off the throne towards his own home town. Prince Mun again spoke in serious tones.

"Look here, Your Excellencies. Since we know each other's true intentions, we could save ourselves a lot of trouble. After all, one of the three of us will take this throne. So how about selecting the man who will sit on it and then carrying it to where he wants it taken?"

"I quite agree. Otherwise, we shall perish at the roadside and never reach the palace." Prince Choe readily agreed. Cho Chang Jin who was playing Prince Choe had not got a clear throat, so that he often spoke in a nasal voice. During the rehearsals he had tried hard to demonstrate this characteristic feature and finally his voice had become similar to Pastor Li Son Yop's.

"Ha ha ha. If he had not the official cap, he is an exact replica of Pastor Li Son Yop." The stocky So Gun Ha said with a laugh. Then the nationalists commented one after another.

"He is much shorter than Pastor Li."

"As short as Pastor Li. But his moustache is different."

Pastor Li suddenly fell in a gloomy mood; he had been very cheerful, enjoying the play. He had an unquenchable desire to run up onto the stage and beat the calves of the legs of that twanging fellow this minute. But Cho Chang Jin recited the words in a more exaggeratedly nasal voice.

"Well, if we are to choose this new king who will start a new royal house, we must settle the matter with loyalty and play it fair and square. Since the king must obey Heaven's will and rule so that the people can live in tranquility, I consider that primary importance should be attached to his virtue, and we should not discuss his appearance."

"However you try, you cannot hope to set on the throne,"

protested Prince Mun. "If you become a king with such a tiny body, the whole world would slight Pine Kingdom. That is not patriotic, Prince Choe, so I think you had better give up and withdraw."

"What's that?" yelled the angered Prince Choe, waving his hands.

"Why do you brag about yourself so? I saw through you, saw your black intentions when you first undertook to make the front legs of the throne and made them so unusually high. It would be better to seat an electric pole on the throne than to make a tall man king."

"What? An electric pole? You outrageous son of a widow, you! The whole world knows that you squandered the nation's wealth and harmed the innocent by your crafts and that you usurped a ministerial post. It is impossible to crown a blackguard like you. And as for the throne, I know that you were cunning enough to make the back of it as narrow as a belt. Go away this minute!"

"You robber! I know what kind of family you come from: For generations, your kind has robbed the people of their property, flattered superiors and stepped on your inferiors. The complaints against your family would fill earth and sky. How dare you claim the throne? Get the hell out of here!"

While the two were foaming at the mouth and fighting, Prince Pak sneaked up the throne unobserved. He thought that if he could once sit on that throne, he would be able to handle them at will since the throne had a divine power. But before Prince Pak's hand touched the throne, Prince Choe saw him and cried out. This brought Prince Mun to himself; he leapt at Prince Pak and pulled at the skirts of his official gown.

"What insolence!" Prince Mun shouted out. "Even the theft of a brass bowl would lead to severe punishment. How can I leave this criminal alone when he is trying to steal the throne?"

"You are right," returned Prince Choe. "Let us kill this traitor right now. He made the front of the throne look as big and long as a catfish's mouth for his underhand purposes."

As the two, now allies rushed forward Prince Pak made for the corner, shouting to Prince Choe.

"Hey, you stupid! That blackguard Mun has more than once tried to involve me in a conspiracy to assassinate you, but in the light of my long-standing friendship with you, I dissuaded him from his attempt. Now you have again been deceived by

that ferocious fellow and are trying to hurt me!"

"What is that?"

Prince Choe got mad and turned to Prince Mun. Changing colour with rage, Prince Mun attacked Prince Pak.

"You rascal, you are resorting to another artifice. Born into a traditionally treacherous family you have always estranged people from each other this way and, fishing in troubled waters, your pot-belly has swollen like a gourd ladle. But you must know that I will never, never forgive you!"

Now it became a complete free-for-all, Prince Pak hitting at Prince Choe, Prince Choe at Prince Mun, and Prince Mun at Prince Pak. Presently all three were exhausted and after gasping for air for some moments, they all rushed towards the throne. They thought once they sat down on it, everything would be settled.

Each minister crawled up the throne only to be dragged down by the others. This process continued for a considerable while, before the beard fell off Cho Chang Jin's chin onto the stage floor. Cho Chang Jin tried to recover it, crawling on his belly.

As he was pulled down by Pak Gwang Sik or Prince Pak, Choe Jin Guk shrieked that his leg was being broken. With his strong hands Pak Gwang Sik really twisted and pulled his leg almost to breaking point. Choe Jin Guk was thus dragged down, jiggling his legs.

All the three men squatted down limply in front of the throne. Their shoulders rose and fell as they faced the audience, who began to laugh. Then did the nationalists change colour. They pursed up their lips and looked up at the stage, their faces turning pale.

After the three ministers recovered their breath, Prince Mun suggested that they rule Pine Kingdom by dividing powers among themselves, as was the vogue nowadays. Princes Pak and Choe agreed, for they were so worn out that they no longer cared.

The three staggered towards the throne and climbed up on the seat. The throne had been built for the three to sit together but now, on the stage, it had room only for two and Cho Chang Jin barely managed to push in. The play had originally been intended to end with the three exhausted men sitting on the throne with their eyes shut, shaking their heads. But because the three students sitting in it were rather large, it could not hold their

weight. It creaked and one of the legs gave way throwing all three ministers onto the ground. They tumbled in a heap. But Choe Jin Guk was witty enough. He adjusted his official cap and quickly rose to his feet, and between painful sobs shouted: "So in the end, our scramble for power broke the throne and ruined Pine Kingdom."

He did it well, though it was entirely improvised. He brought together the palms of his hands and sobbed, nodding his head.

The curtain fell slowly covering the broken throne. There was loud applause followed by laughter.

The nationalist leaders who had been sitting in the front row sprang up to their feet and made a general stir. They did not utter a word. Only the loud coughs of the indignant Li Gwang Jin were heard. They hurriedly made for the exit which was blocked by a crowd of people and managed to get out.

The applause became louder. It sounded like a summer shower. All the students who had been at the back stood up and clapped their hands. Paek Rak Jin and Chong Min Su remained seated. They were clapping too.

"A good play. Really excellent," shouted Paek Rak Jin. He was so excited that when he clapped his hands he followed through with his whole body.

Only then Comrade Kum Song appeared on the stage and joined the audience in the applause. When they saw his face, the audience went nearly frantic with applause.

CHAPTER XII

HARD TIMES

1

Next morning only a few nationalists arrived at Fu Hsing-tai's rice-cleaning mill. Old Li Gap Mu was not there, nor old Sim Hak nor Choe Hwal. It was said Li Gwang Jin was confined to bed by high blood pressure.

As it was Sunday Comrade Kum Song did not go to school and went to the mill. He had seen how the nationalists had reacted last night, but he thought that he should make the purpose of the play still clearer. He went into the room, unaffectedly offering them greetings. But all the nationalists present cut him dead. They sat and smoked their cigarettes, and looked very grave. Paek Rak Jin was the only person who offered him a seat. But he too remained silent, puffing at a cigarette.

"You must all have been tired last night."

"You needn't care whether we are tired or no. But what was that play of last night? Whom did you intend to slander?" Li Pil Su asked, jerking up his chin. The tips of his triangular moustache were quivering.

Comrade Kum Song did not reply immediately. A "Chamui-bu" man in tortoise-shell spectacles asked him why they tried to meddle in the merger conference with their play.

"We shall be satisfied if you elders gained some momentum. At any rate, please understand that the last night's play spoke for all the youth."

"But we have never fought for power at our merger conference," interposed a man of "Sinmin-bu".

"If that is true, why are you so angry? For, then it would be sticking your nose in affairs that have nothing to do with you."

The "Sinmin-bu" man became very flustered. Paek Rak Jin looked still gloomier.

"But why has your meeting dragged on for more than half a year? What have you been discussing, sir?" Comrade Kum Song said. "We young people have been fretting as we watched you. We cannot but think that there is a great deal of antagonism at the bottom. This sort of meeting should be criticised by the young people. You must be criticised however much it hurts. We staged the play not because we wanted it. You should know the play contains the young people's sincere advice."

"Those who reprove the young folk for their play are like the ministers of Pine Kingdom who appeared on the stage last night. They might ruin Korea just as they did in Pine Kingdom. We must put this damned conference to rights come what will—even if our brains are crushed. I have devoted my whole life to the independence movement, but I have never been so thoughtful as last night." Paek Rak Jin said, blood rushing to his cheeks.

The atmosphere of the room was somewhat dispirited. Nobody dared speak out.

At that very moment, at a rice-cleaning mill called Taifengho Choe Hwal of the "Provisional Government in Shanghai" was noisily praising last night's play before many students. He was excited, and his face was as red as a ground cherry.

"Excellent play. It was a match for any play on in the best theatres in Shanghai. I have seen countless plays in many countries but I have never seen such an impressive one as last night's."

The young men filled the two rooms to capacity, listening to Choe Hwal. Among them were Choe Jin Guk and Pak Gwang Sik who had had parts in it. This mill had been used for the rehearsal and some of the props were still piled up in the corner.

"But you gentlemen never applauded—you took to a flight, didn't you?" said Pak Gwang Sik to Choe Hwal, grinning.

"We had no time to clap hands; you hit us so hard that our necks were almost broken...ha, ha, ha...."

Choe Hwal laughed, his body shaking, and the students, too, laughed loudly. It was true that Choe Hwal had also been much affected and had returned to his inn in an unhappy mood. But he had soon realized that there was no reason to resent it.

He had attended the merger conference first of all in order to make sure that a new united body was integrated under the structure of the "Provisional Government in Shanghai". This had not yet been formally considered, but the whole meeting had shown that none of the groups paid any attention to the exist-

ence even of the PGS. They did not seem to care about it at all. And yet, in his wishful thinking, Choe had sometimes sided with "Chongui-bu" and at other times with "Sinmin-bu" or "Chamui-bu"; he had waited for anyone of the three to get the upper hand. But he soon realised that whichever group gained the upper hand, it was certain that the PGS would not rule supreme. So he had often felt like walking in to disorganise the meetings because that would not be achieved in any case. Fortunately, the young people had dealt the merger conference a real blow last night. So in the end, Choe Hwal had achieved his goal through the agency of others.

"You must stage another such play. And go on hitting at the merger conference. Until they all have broken necks...." Choe Hwal was elated. Choe Jin Guk could not but ask him if he himself had nothing to do with the conference.

"Why should I have anything to do with that foul bunch? I am Minister of Finance on the payroll of the PGS. I am of a different kind from the parasites of 'Chongui-bu', 'Sinmin-bu' or 'Chamui-bu'. As you showed in your play, all three of those are very mean. That's what I think."

Choe Hwal blew a cloud of smoke, waving his hand.

"Which is a good group then?"

"The PGS, of course. If you are in the independence movement, you must know all about the PGS. You can't fight an independence movement without knowing your own government."

All the students in the upper and lower rooms listened, smiling to Choe Hwal. They knew that he wasn't a man of high calibre from the way he always bid for popularity among the students.

"Would you tell us about that 'Provisional Government in Shanghai', sir?" asked Choe Jin Guk, grinning.

Choe Hwal was delighted.

"Ahem, I am a busy man, but I'll certainly find time to talk to you. Now, listen to me carefully because it is a shame for Koreans to know nothing about the 'Provisional Government in Shanghai'."

Choe Hwal blew out smoke, knitting his brows. He had been very unhappy that An Muk, one of the leaders of the PGS, had been in Kirin and had eulogized America, instead of doing propaganda for the PGS. If he is leader of the PGS, An Muk should have done propaganda for his own government, he thought. That would have given an advantage to the PGS delegate, giving him a say at the merger conference, and both the

delegates of the three groups and the general public would see the PGS in a new light.

That was why Choe Hwal started talking about the PGS to hit back at An Muk. He told a long story of how, after the March the First Movement, members of the independence movement had flocked to the French concession in Shanghai. He listed the names of those who had come to Shanghai, counting them on his plump fingers one by one.

"So, renowned independence fighters gathered like clouds and issued a declaration establishing a 'Provisional Government'. Oh, our spirits were sky-high. Hurrahs for independence shook all parts of Korea, while right in the middle of Shanghai there were moves towards the formation of a government.... It is worth living in this age of storm and stress...."

"Were you there yourself, sir?"

"Why not? Well, whether I was or not, it was tremendous at the time—they all say so." He prevaricated; in fact, he had not been there then, and the lie had troubled his conscience.

"The basket is big, sir," said Choe Jin Guk again. All his colleagues laughed, expecting sarcastic remarks from him.

"What do you mean by the basket?" asked Choe Hwal staring at Choe Jin Guk.

"You have the basket right there. The 'Provisional Government' is none other than the basket, isn't it? Because you put what you call politics in it."

"Not only politics. They put in army, economy, education—everything." One of the students added to what Choe Jin Guk had said.

"You mustn't use such metaphors. How can you liken the 'Provisional Government' to a basket...."

"You don't seem keen on the word basket, but I am. If we liken it to a basket made of bamboo or twigs, you might as well be unhappy about it. But I am likening it to a diamond basket, sir."

There was a peal of laughter among the students.

"Don't be so silly, um?"

Choe Hwal was mad because the students ridiculed what he had explained with such zeal.

"We would like to know what the PGS is doing, sir."

"Yes, sir. It's not the basket, but what's in it."

"Don't use the word basket any more!" thundered out Choe

Hwal. He was annoyed, but continued to talk. "Don't you know what the PGS does? We have trained an army, published the newspaper *Independence*, issued bonds, submitted a petition to the Paris Peace Conference. Don't you know that?"

As Choe Hwal was shouting, Comrade Kum Song came in through the upper door, accompanied by Chae Gyong.

"Why all this noise?" asked Comrade Kum Song, looking around the room.

"He is angry because I asked him what the PGS was doing." Pak Gwang Sik explained, and Choe Hwal turned on him.

"You rascals, are you trying to make fun of me?"

"Who's making fun of you, sir? We can make fun of the sham government in Shanghai, but how could we make fun of you, sir?"

"What? Sham government?"

Choe Hwal looked dumbfounded. He swallowed, and then looked up at Comrade Kum Song and asked: "Do you all think that?"

Staring down at Choe Hwal, Comrade Kum Song said sternly: "Of course. It is a sham government. What kind of organization do you think it is? You have just said that you have trained an army. Well, how many soldiers have you trained?"

"We *are* training them."

"And how much money did you get by issuing bonds? And who squandered for what?"

As Comrade Kum Song interrogated, Choe Hwal became tied in knots, not knowing what to say. This raised Pak Gwang Sik's spirits and he asked one question after another, hitting the floor. The rough-spoken student did this in a gruff voice:

"What did you gain by petitioning the Paris Peace Conference? What benefit from visiting Switzerland? What about your three-point request made to America's President Harding? Who embezzled the independence funds collected at home and abroad?"

Comrade Kum Song was surprised to see Choe Hwal so hard pressed by Pak Gwang Sik's questions. Blinded by avarice and scramble for power, his kind were squandering money collected from patriotic Koreans, he thought to himself, from people who desperately wished to see their homeland independent! The PGS is the place where those brazen characters swagger around playing the politician.

Comrade Kum Song could not take any more and said.

"What kind of Korean independence do you advocate? And what are you doing towards it except maintaining a so-called government, collecting funds from patriots to squander and sending off petitions to great powers? Tell me. You cannot look the Korean people in the eye."

Choe Hwal was really taken aback.

"Well, tell me...who is wasting the independence funds collected in our country, and in which restaurant? Out with you! I'm going to strip that 'Provisional Government in Shanghai' stark naked."

Pak Gwang Sik edged up to him.

"What? strip it naked?"

"We'll see its true colours when we take the covers off."

Choe Hwal gasped, speechless. He was not a sort of man who gives in even when he has no answer. If speech deserted him, he resisted by shouting, and if he could no longer shout, he'd go into a frenzy. His red-hot face had now gone deep purple. He was wheezing.

"Wait. You people have never tasted real bitterness. Gwang Sik, you said you want to see the 'Provisional Government' stripped. I will take off my clothes. And if I stand here stark naked, do you think it will not shame you as a Korean youth?"

Choe Hwal jumped up to his feet.

He took off the coat of his Western suit and tore open his vest with the gold watch-chain ripping off some buttons as he did so. At first the students stared blankly because they really thought the man was going to hit Pak Gwang Sik. But then Choe Hwal took off his shirt, as well.

"If the PGS is put to shame, do you think the whole Korean nation will not feel that shame? If I go out into the Kirin streets stark naked, will that not shame you all? What's the use of keeping a government which nobody supports?"

It seemed Choe Hwal was going to take off every stitch of cloth, and the students who felt they could not stand by watching any more, got up and grabbed Choe's wrists. He pushed them back with formidable strength, catching Cho Chang Jin hard on the jaw with his elbow.

The students held him by wrists and blocked the doorway so that he could not run out. He shouted to them to let go and pulled towards the door. The students could hardly control the frenzied man. Then, Pak Gwang Sik, who had been seated in the upper room, asking his colleagues to leave him alone,

jumped up and rushed at him, bringing Choe Hwal down to the floor, nobody quite knew how.

The shameful scene was soon over. Comrade Kum Song went out because he found it too shaming to watch.

Presently Choe Hwal started putting on his clothes and, hot-faced said:

"You are slighting the 'Provisional Government'. But just you wait until we have our independence. I wonder if you'll slight us then." And with these words Choe Hwal went out. He trembled and dragged the toes of his enamelled shoes.

There was no laughter. The students did not see it as a comedy but rather a tragedy, something they would have to think over very seriously.

Comrade Kum Song had planned to go to Liberation Village with Chae Gyong that day, but he put off his plan and went back to his lodgings.

He sat at the desk, lost in thought. But soon he got up again for he found it quite impossible to calm down. He paced the room for a while and then went back to his desk and sat down again, gripping it by a corner.

This is not something to laugh at, he was thinking. Not funny at all. Rather it gives cause for tears and for lament. How it saddens my heart! That they should claim to be fighting for Korean independence, these hooligans of the PGS. They don't know that times have changed, or what destiny awaits them; they just shout out-of-date slogans. They are a bunch of hooligans, a bunch of backward bourgeois nationalists, real stinkers. I must gouge it out. Yes, this ulcer must be cut off without mercy. We do not want them in the ranks of the Korean independence movement.

Again and again he thought about the incredible scene he had just witnessed however hard he tried to stop.

2

After the play, the merger conference did not meet for two whole days.

A few people had wandered into Fu Hsing-tai's rice-clean-

ing mill and smoked and talked desultorily and then gone off again. But on the third day everybody came back, including old Li Gap Mu and Sim Hak as well as Li Gwang Jin who was said to be confined to bed because of high blood pressure. Li Gwang Jin did look fairly vigorous, though his face was haggard and his moustache untrimmed. He always kept his chin clean shaven and the tips of his tiger-moustache neatly. But now his chin was black and his unkempt moustache spilled over his lips. Everybody was present except Choe Hwal, the PGS delegate. He had left the same evening after making that monstrous scene; After the way he had behaved in front of the students he had left Kirin where he in any case had felt no need to stay now. For what was the use of staying on when it was clearly impossible to get the three groups lined up behind the PGS, even if he did keep going to the merger conference? He had broken his walking stick across his knee, thrown two pieces in the air and gone. Always when things turned out badly for him, it was his superstitious custom to break a walking stick.

Paek Rak Jin made the merger conference a complete face-about. He proposed sternly that the conference should take a cool look at itself and see if it had been engaged in a scramble for power. He looked so awe-inspiring, that nobody dared to answer. Li Gwang Jin and his colleagues from "Sinmin-bu" were silent. Their delegation had held a meeting that had lasted a whole day, and the prevailing view had been that as they had no hope of being able to include their policy in a party platform, they should withdraw their proposal on party foundation, otherwise "Sinmin-bu" would lay itself open to a great deal of criticism from the public and would be likely to take all the blame for that scramble for power shown up in *The Throne of Pine Kingdom*. In the circumstances, Li Gwang Jin decided to give in.

So now there were no further obstacles for Paek Rak Jin, as he confidently steered the meeting with the support of old Sim Hak and Li Gap Mu, who said that they should form some sort of united body without delay to avoid the censure of the younger generation.

So, by mid-winter the merger conference had ended.

Things seemed to be tackled smoothly, yet there were still many complicated issues. Their solution required a good deal of time even after the students' play.

At any rate, an integrated body, called "Kukmin-bu", the

Nation Group, had come into being.

The night the conference was over Paek Rak Jin heaved a sigh of relief and returned home wiping away a tear, in the memory of Kim Hyong Jik. For though he had failed to achieve his dead leader's will, he was still pleased that he had at least achieved this much though he was sad that it had not been more.

Paek Rak Jin thought a lot. If only Kim Hyong Jik were still alive, if he could meet him at least once and tell him everything—the recent troubles, his worries and his anger. And, he would also have liked to explain the orientation of "Kukmin-bu" to him.

Next evening Paek Rak Jin invited Comrade Kum Song to dinner. Longing for the father Kim Hyong Jik, he was happy to see the son, Comrade Kum Song.

"Let us drink together," proposed Paek Rak Jin, raising his cup.

"I do not drink, sir."

"You do not drink and yet you can take bitter pills? I am going to drink because I feel happy. We now have a united body and I will start working with vigour. But I don't mean I am going to continue with the old form of movement. Having learned from your dear and honoured father and seen your movement, I have a new resolve now. Now I look at you in a new light...."

"Do please drink, sir."

"Then I must drink myself."

Paek Rak Jin raised the cup to his lips and then quickly brought out his handkerchief and dabbed his eyes.

Paek Rak Jin was in haste. Every day representatives of different groups were gathered in his parlour to discuss the personnel for different localities, and to consider plans for education, such as primary and middle schools.

One morning, just as he was about to get up, Yu Sang Jo visited him, panting, carrying his walking stick.

"Why, when did you get back?"

"On last night's train, sir."

"Ah, you are back early," said Paek Rak Jin, folding up his bedding.

Soon after the merger conference, Yu Sang Jo had said that Choe Min Hak, a very rich man in Seoul, had been staying in Changchun and that he would go and see him for he knew him well. He had said that he thought he would be able to get a

large sum of money from him for the independence funds. Old Li Gap Mu and Paek Rak Jin had advised him to go. Old Li Gap Mu had given his Mauser revolver wishing him a safe return. The two men had never dreamed that Yu Sang Jo was hatching a very dirty plot.

Paek Rak Jin thought Yu Sang Jo had been to Changchun while in actual fact it was to Mukden Yu had been.

At Mukden he had met Kunihiko who had crossed the border on new instructions from the "Governor-General of Korea". Kunihiko was at present hiding in Mukden. As a result of Kunihiko's recent bitter experience, they were devising a plan that did not require help from the Chang Tso-lin military clique. Yu Sang Jo had met Kunihiko, and come back after finalising the arrangements to arrest old Li Gap Mu and Paek Rak Jin.

"Well, what is the result?"

"I met him. But there is some tricky business, sir."

"What is it?"

Paek Rak Jin sat there holding a cigarette between his lips looking at Yu Sang Jo. Supposedly Yu Sang Jo had raced straight to his place, and yet he looked quite fresh, in his neat tie, with his hair well-groomed.

"Choe Min Hak is still in hospital in Changchun because of his throat; he came to Manchuria with people from his company for some trade transactions, and he got a sore throat and is now waiting for an operation." Yu Sang Jo said unaffectedly, bringing a cigarette to his lips. His hands did not shake even a trifle when he lit it.

"So I saw him at the hospital. He was so happy to see me, he embraced me. His throat is not yet recovered, so he could not speak properly. Ho, ho, ho. And I raised the matter direct. He said he had already known while in Seoul what I was doing here. He even knew about the merger conference. Anyway, it seems that all news from Kirin goes straight to Seoul."

"Of course it must, for Koreans are interested in the situation here."

"When I raised the matter, he turned rather serious. When it concerns money, that is only natural however rich he is, running companies and digging mountains of gold, because we are asking him for a great deal of money, isn't it?"

"Quite probable...."

"On the first day he said he would think about it, that was all. I went back to my hotel, and visited him again next day. But

he was silent and indeed gloomy. So it looked as if I would fail in my mission. This made me indignant. It was hard for me to repress an urge to stick my hand into my bosom."

Yu Sang Jo stretched his hand and stuck it into his bosom where old Li Gap Mu's Mauser was kept.

"But by the third day, his attitude had changed a bit, though he was still very cautious. He said he, too, was a Korean, and as such he could not refuse. And he said he knew he could not contribute money to the independence funds the way small propertied people do. I felt reassured. This makes one feel worthwhile working for the independence movement. Ha ha ha."

Yu Sang Jo laughed, patting Paek Rak Jin on the knee. There was a smile around Paek Rak Jin's lips.

"So I worked on him in real earnest, in order to get a really substantial sum.... He said he was going to contribute a large amount of money, but how could he just hand it over, recklessly without ever meeting any of our leaders. So I asked if he did not trust us. He replied that no, it was, indeed, because he did trust us. And honestly, it seems quite reasonable for Choe to express such a desire. I was sure that, if you consider that he is requesting to meet our leaders, the contribution he is planning won't be paltry. So I said that I did not think it would be difficult to arrange."

Paek Rak Jin just listened without commenting.

"Mr. Paek, you must not lose this chance. We must stick close to him—we might well get as much as even half his wealth. I really think that that is possible for he is one of the richest men in Korea. If we were to get half his wealth, it would be really wonderful. So, I really think that Mr. Li Gap Mu and you, Mr. Paek, should go to Changchun with me."

Paek Rak Jin kept his lips pursed up. But the veins pulsated under his ears. What can we do right now without funds? Paek Rak Jin was thinking. First of all, you cannot build schools without money. It will take a great deal of money to build a primary school in each district. And if we want middle schools, how much will we need then? Yet even a small fraction of Choe Min Hak's fortune would be enough to pay for all of this. And we might get as much as half his wealth. Even if Yu Sang Jo was exaggerating a little, it still would probably be a lot.

With trembling fingers Paek Rak Jin lit another cigarette. "I will go. Mr. Li Gap Mu has caught a cold and is in bed

now. Will it do if I go alone?"

"Can't we have him go along with us?"

"We can't. Let two of us go, taking Mr. Li Gap Mu's letter with us."

Paek Rak Jin and Yu Sang Jo went straight to old Li Gap Mu and asked him to write a letter to Choe Min Hak. He took up a writing brush and wrote in a respectful tone, his hand shaking like a leaf.

That very day, Paek Rak Jin and Yu Sang Jo set out on the Changchun train. Paek Rak Jin was still excited, feeling as if a new day was dawning for the independence movement as soon as the new organization was set up. He was racking his brains on how to handle Choe Min Hak to get him to give half his wealth.

As the train approached Changchun, a crimson evening sun was setting over the horizon. The huge mass of fire was smiling over a darkish blue sea of clouds.

"Where do you keep your pistol, sir?"

"In my bosom. Why?"

"We are lucky that they did not search us. Hide it deep there, sir. They might search at the station."

The nearer Changchun station came, the more often Yu Sang Jo went over to the door.

Paek Rak Jin's train puffed into Changchun railway station. All the passengers got up and bustled out. Women carrying bundles on the heads and gentlemen with their boxes—all kinds of passengers making a great stir. Paek Rak Jin watched Yu Sang Jo's hand which was shaking as he picked up Paek's walking stick.

He is as scared as a dog, thought Paek Rak Jin reproaching Yu Sang Jo.

Paek Rak Jin followed Yu Sang Jo towards the door. They carried nothing but their walking sticks. An icy wind was blowing in his face and Paek Rak Jin turned up his coat collar. But Yu Sang Jo tried hard to wriggle through the congested exit, holding the hand with the walking stick, paying no attention to Paek Rak Jin. This aroused Paek Rak Jin's suspicion. It was so strange that he quickly took out his pistol and put it into his coat pocket, he elbowed his way through the crowd with difficulty to alight onto the platform. Yu Sang Jo was nowhere to be seen.

"This fellow is queer, indeed," thought Paek Rak Jin, and

went over to where people were relatively sparse. At this moment, two tall strangers ran up to him and tried to twist his arms. Another man came running up with a rope to tie him up. Paek Rak Jin kicked one in yellow glasses who was holding the right wrist in the crotch. The raiders could not get Paek Rak Jin easily, because at the last moment he had prepared for the worst.

Paek Rak Jin kicked him again, and he fell down in a heap. In that split second Paek pulled out the pistol and fired twice. Both the fellow who had his left wrist and the one with rope collapsed on the ground.

"You bastard, you brought me here to do this? Where are you, you Japs' dog?" Paek Rak Jin shouted panting as he looked for him. He found more plain-clothes policemen; there were a few dozen of them encircling him. Shouting to him to surrender, they closed in step by step. Behind them Yu Sang Jo stood and watched, leaning on his walking stick, dead scared. Paek Rak Jin glared at him, his legs trembling.

"You filthy swine!" he thundered. Stepping over pools of blood he made for Yu Sang Jo.

"If I knew you are a lackey of the Japs, I would have torn you to shreds..."

And Paek Rak Jin took aim at Yu Sang Jo. At this moment several of the plain-clothes policemen fired simultaneously. Several bullets hit Paek Rak Jin in the legs, and he went down like a tree felled at the base. But he did not let go of his gun. Moving up his pistol hand, he jerked up his head. His clothes were soaked in blood; and the blood streamed from his brow. He made a tremendous effort, scratching at the blood-soaked ground with his fingers. But he could not get to his feet. His head was heavy and his throat was wet with blood.

"What a pity! Am I going to die like this? I was going to work so happily with the newly-formed 'Kukmin-bu'. Is that now all in vain?" He burst out sobbing, mortified that it should end like this. He suddenly saw Comrade Kum Song's image.

"Look, I was going to follow you. I saw your enterprising spirit. But now I come to this, without even seeing the new society where everybody is equal. How awful, that I must die and carry that wish to the grave?"

Paek Rak Jin hit at the floor with his clenched fist. Police were rushing forward from all directions. But Paek Rak Jin shook

his head and, making one last effort, he stood up, no one knew how. The glow of evening sunset dyed his body a glorious red. He took one step after another, putting his feet firmly on the earth. The skirt of his overcoat fluttered like that of a golden armour.

Paek Rak Jin stopped in the middle of the platform which sloped up, raised his gun to where his ear was covered with a lock of grey hair and pulled the trigger. He took one more step and collapsed on the ground as the skirt of his blood-soaked overcoat caught his legs.

3

They buried Paek Rak Jin in Kirin and every Korean in the town grieved for him. And when the news that old Sim Hak and several other "Chamui-bu" people had been arrested by the Japs on their way to Tunhua county reached old Li Gap Mu, he fainted. So Gun Ha and Li Pil Su sent for a doctor and after a great commotion they managed to bring the old man to his senses. He was lying in bed grinding his teeth when he was being told that two Independence Army men who had been sent to Changchun were back. They followed Yu Sang Jo to his hotel room in Mukden where they drove a dagger into his heart.

Comrade Kum Song had gone to school with a heavy heart. Though they had fought many bloody battles the whole Independence Army generation had now come to an unhappy end. Again he saw the shameful scenes at the merger conference, remembering how shouting and sweating and red in the face Paek Rak Jin had done all he could to set things right. We must criticize and oppose the nationalist movement itself which had been continually engrossed in the scramble for power, but how could we reproach the patriotic spirit against Japan and burning passion of Paek Rak Jin who had tried to get clear of the factional strife and start on a new road?

Even while he was reading at his lodgings, he would drift off to sad thoughts.

One morning he dropped in at Paek Sun Gi's. He was on his way to Fusung where he was going to spend his school holi-

days. There was an atmosphere of sadness in Paek Sun Gi's home. Paek Sun Gi was lying in bed in the best room; he had come home when he heard of his father's tragic death. As Comrade Kum Song came into the room, he sat up in bed looking mortified.

"Don't you feel well?"

"No, I don't."

"You look to have rather weakened during your stay in Seoul."

"Can't be helped. And how is your mother in Fusung?"

"She is all right."

Comrade Kum Song went down to the boarded floor of the kitchen, where Paek Sun Hui and her mother were both sobbing.

"Don't cry. It is time to stop crying now; you must look forward and live and you must resolve to fight the Japs."

"You are right, my boy. We must be strong and live up to the wishes of the dead; we must give greater help to the independence movement." Sun Hui's mother said this, brushing away her tears. But Paek Sun Hui turned into the corner and wept on. He went back into the upper room.

"Cheer up now."

"Thank you."

Paek Sun Gi heaved a long sigh of sorrow.

"You look so sad at your father's death. You mustn't be discouraged. You must pull yourself together and think about the struggle. It is a grim battle that awaits us. I am not advising you for you don't know what to do. Anguish will not win the battle. So pull yourself together. I would like to discuss some problems with you. Are you leaving for Seoul soon?"

"I can't go for the time being."

"Then I shall see you when I come back from Fusung. I have had a letter from my mother and I must go to Fusung. When I return here, tell me about Seoul. When leaving for Seoul, you had been agonizing deeply over serious problems. And I would like to know what you saw in Seoul."

He chatted with Paek Sun Gi for quite a while. Then he took his leave, and told him to look after himself.

All the family came out to see him off, Paek Sun Gi supported by his sister.

"Remember me to your mother. I was told that Cho Byong Do conveyed the news of my husband's death to her. How nice it would be if she lived near us." Paek Sun Gi's mother spoke

with great affection. Comrade Kum Song repeated that they must not be discouraged, that they must resolve to fight the Japs. Then with a firm handshake he was off.

Paek Sun Gi went back to the best room and lay down in bed again. He was very tired.

"Why, how ill you look!" exclaimed his mother entering the room.

"I don't feel unwell."

"But you look really ill. You looked like that when you were in Seoul, too?"

"In Seoul, too."

Mother and son talked briefly. The mother put her hand on her son's forehead, the other one holding his hand.

"Did you study hard in Seoul?"

"I did. You can study better there than in Kirin."

Paek Sun Gi held his mother's hand, which was wrinkled and heavily veined. This hand had done hard work, for she had helped her husband all her life. The son wanted to cry, rubbing his cheeks against her hands.

"I think I must send for a doctor."

"No, it isn't necessary."

"But how can I sit arms folded when you look so ill?"

"Leave me alone. I am quite all right."

Without replying the mother watched his bluish eyelids. Then she got to her feet and went out.

Paek Sun Gi closed his eyes and heaved another sigh. He felt as if he was falling into a bottomless pit. It was dark all round him without a glimmer of light. The noisy voices of Seoul still rang in his ears.

Last summer he had gone to Seoul, had visited Sim Chang Do who ran an inn in Seoul as his father had told him to and with his help had entered a college. He had stayed at Sim Chang Do's inn. Sim Chang Do had once been in the independence movement, but after he had been in prison, he had turned to running an inn. Since his main purpose in going to Seoul had not been study, Paek Sun Gi had soon asked Sim about independence movement organizations in Seoul.

"Independence movement organizations? What do you want with them?"

"Isn't there any organization?"

"Ho ho ho," laughed Sim Chang Do and added. "You must be looking for something with youthful vigour, just like we used

to risk our lives, when the 'Protectorate Treaty' was signed. But you mustn't run wild. Just concentrate on your studies...you've got a bright future, and you can fight without all these organizations."

And with these words Sim Chang Do picked his stick and limped out into the courtyard. He had been crippled by the Japs when he was in prison. Paek Sun Gi felt dejected after this first talk with Sim. But he tried to find out more about the situation in Seoul.

One day Paek Sun Gi went to visit Chang In Uk, a nationalist leader who had formed an organization called Yonjonghoe. He lived at the foot of Mt. Pukak. It was a palatial mansion. Chang In Uk had taught Paek Rak Jin in middle school. His husky body dressed in cool hemp clothes, the old man met Paek Sun Gi and talked about bygone days with a thousand emotions and asked him about his father.

As the subject of their conversation shifted to the present life of Paek Rak Jin and his independence movement, Chang In Uk became cool and looked embarrassed. Chang said that even if the three groups did unite, it would avail them little. This annoyed Paek Sun Gi but he heard him out without a word. Chang In Uk, who had also been through tough times and was equipped with worldly wisdom, did what he thought necessary. Obviously he was afraid that the appearance of this suspicious youth might have an ill affect on his life, so he made his position clear, by making the following declaration, which Paek Sun Gi had never asked for: A student must study. Students' strikes, ideological movements, and socialist movements are run by idiots. No force on earth could match the Japanese imperialists. They were too strong and there was no hope at all of independence. We might achieve some kind of national autonomy, and that would have to do. In the present circumstances, it would be best to run our own schools and industries. It is no use looking up at a tree that one cannot climb. That was the conclusion he had come to after devoting all his life to the movement, he said.

Paek Sun Gi left Chang In Uk's house, feeling as if he had been hit on the head.

From then on Paek Sun Gi walked with bowed head, gripped by anguish. If this is the real Korea, it is too miserable, he thought. Kirin is still in furore and not withering like this.

He did not want to fall into despair, but on Sundays, when people went out to Changgyong palace grounds, to Chongrungs

and to Chaha Gate, he would lie in bed in his room at the inn counting cobwebs on the ceiling.

One day he went out with his classmate Han Chang Bok to meet his father Han Yun. Han Yun had been an office director under a ministry in the "Provisional Government in Shanghai", and there was a time when he used to cross the wild West Sea on smuggler vessels loaded with arms from Shanghai for the Headquarters of the Liberation Army in Manchuria. Paek Rak Jin knew Han Yun well and he told his son, Paek Sun Gi, about this man. But today Han Yun was said to be more concerned with the movement to encourage local production and self-sufficiency.

On their way Han Chang Bok took Paek Sun Gi into a shop which carried the sign "Home Products Only". And, in fact, every item in the shop was made in Korea. Rubber shoes, socks, Korean paper, stone ink, writing brushes, large baskets, mirrors—everything was Korean. The same was true with the textiles section. There was a great variety of silks and satins, a goodly range of coarse and fine hemp fabrics from different areas. Children's rainbow-coloured jackets, ribbons and leg-ties and all sorts of sundries were on display. The range of brassware was very wide—rice bowls, saucers, small kettles, *sinsonro* (or fairy pots), candle sticks and incense burners and wine cups in all shapes and sizes. They had spent a long time looking round, before they got to the pottery section.

"They are very skilful anyway. Because they made all those with their own efforts..." said Paek Sun Gi, mopping the sweat off his forehead. Han Chang Bok laughed, his face reddening.

"Just a minute, I'm a Korean, so I can't leave empty-handed. I must buy something."

Paek Sun Gi came back to the general goods section. He looked round, but he could not find a thing he really needed. He bought a bell with a handle, and pushing it into his pocket, came out of the shop with Han Chang Bok.

"Look, what's the use of my meeting your father? Let's go to the Han River for some fresh air."

"But you must meet him. I told him that you were coming, and so he will be waiting for you."

"I'd better not go; he must be very busy. If your father asks you about me, tell him that I bought an instrument for Korean independence."

"Instrument for Korean independence?"

"Isn't this the instrument for Korean independence?"

Paek Sun Gi pulled out and shook the bell.

"Oh, you rascal!"

Han Chang Bok hit Paek Sun Gi on the shoulder and laughed blushing. That evening they went to the Han River, where, looking up at the darkening sky, they discussed whether they should stay at home or go abroad. Han Chang Bok was not happy either about his father's movement. So, he rang Paek Sun Gi's bell, and jeered, "One ring, for 'love of your country and your people'. Two for 'autonomy movement', three for 'economic development'. And the bell will also bring 'national reform' and the 'union for cultural attainment'."

In a sense this was another powerful blow to Paek Sun Gi. But life in Seoul was not discouraging in every way. Some aspects had been a great eye-opener for Paek Sun Gi.

In the evenings Sim Chang Do's inn was always very crowded. Many of them were from the country. They played chess or cards or sat and talked. Sim Chang Do's wife was always busy with the guests.

But this was only the superficial business. There was another business with which Sim Chang Do and his wife were much concerned which was done in the rooms of a building at the back, where the inn-keeper had his office and where the family lived—Paek Sun Gi's room was also there.

Sim Chang Do did not let anybody stay here except people in movements. People of all kinds came to stay there—members of groups in rural areas, or from abroad or in Seoul and socialists more than nationalists. They used these rooms to live in, and sometimes for meetings. Sim Chang Do never let outsiders into this building.

One evening these rooms were packed with socialists. In one room the leadership of the Korean Communist Party were meeting, and in another leaders of the General Federation of Labour. In another room still ten or so workers delegates from the country were discussing the strike at the local mine. Among the leaders of the KCP was Wol Pa. He had come straight to Seoul the minute the short training course for local organizers by the Hailan River had broken up to meet a man who was just back from the Communist International.

That evening they were making a lot of noise in the back rooms, there seemed to be some sort of argument going on.

Sim Chang Do came, paced up and down restlessly in Paek Sun Gi's room. Sim Chang Do was ill at ease whenever his back

rooms were crowded like this.

"What is your view of socialism?"

"Sir?"

"What do you think about the socialist movement?"

"Ho ho ho. Well, the...erh...."

Paek Sun Gi could not reply, dumbfounded.

"I don't know much about socialism either. Myself I had rejected it as immoral. But I'm afraid that it maybe high time for second thoughts. For if it really were that bad and immoral, the world would not make such a fuss. First of all, the Russian people accepted this doctrine and made the revolution because they like it...."

"Wasn't it Lenin and his Bolshevik Party, rather than the Russian people?"

"Ha ha ha. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party could hardly have done it without the strength of the people behind them. How could it have been done by any individual or by a small party?" Sim Chang Do said, limping round the room. It seemed to Paek Sun Gi that the inn-keeper was making excuses for the socialists making such a racket in the back rooms.

"Well, I am not sure about it, sir. Whether the Russian people accepted it at the bottom of their hearts and worked for it of their own accord, nobody knows. Truth is always on the side of the victor. When the victor claims that his doctrine is truth, then it becomes truth."

"Ho ho ho. Your resistance is quite strong, eh? But you must also realize that if you are too prejudiced, you cannot regard truth as such...of course, I don't mean that socialism is the only genuine truth...but we must not forget why socialist ideas have been appearing all over the world in our time. At present there is a socialist movement in virtually every country—Japan, Great Britain, France and even in small countries; all of them are now on the move. In China, the Communists and Sun Yat-tsen have published a joint manifesto—the Communist and Nationalist Parties are co-operating. What does all this show? Doesn't it show that socialism and communism are an ideology that cannot be ignored and that they are developing into a formidable force? There must be something to it that mankind must sympathize with." Sim Chang Do spoke rather excitedly.

Paek Sun Gi was silent. He noted that Sim Chang Do was strongly inclined towards socialism and wondered why this man who had spent years in the nationalist movement should have

made this turn.

After talking to Paek Sun Gi, Sim Chang Do went over to the boarded floor of the kitchen and asked for supper tables to be taken to the back rooms. Sim's wife was moving about among tables covered with various dishes, chasing the flies off with a fan. As the kitchen maid started carrying the supper tables, Sim Chang Do's husky wife went down into the kitchen and passed out one table after another.

When the night was well advanced, some one was wailing in one of the back rooms. Sim Chang Do and Paek Sun Gi went hurriedly into the room. But that lot of socialists had all left. Only local workers' delegates were still in the hall, and they were about to leave. One of them was wailing, banging the floor with his fist.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Well, we've finished our business, and are leaving by a night train," a bearded worker replied, packing up a bundle.

"You came here to try and solve some of the problems of your strike. So what measures are you taking?"

"What measures? Nobody trusts the leadership in Seoul, except some sons of bitches," the same worker replied.

"Sir, you are also a socialist, they say. Why are there so few people in Korea? Why don't we have a leader who shows us which way to go?" The miner who had been wailing, asked Sim Chang Do, beating at the floor of the hall.

Sim Chang Do's legs quivered as if he was palsied.

"Sir, how can we live on? We have been on strike for nearly two months now, and blacklegs have taken all our jobs. Our strike has failed. So what will happen to the 500 miners who were sacked—where will they go with their families? Where will we be able to scratch any sort of living?"

"Shut up! Who has ever helped us however we complained? We must find a way out ourselves," said the bearded worker.

But the first worker continued with his plaint, taking no notice of him.

"Sir, we fought to make our living out of this. Could this be food for man?"

The worker unwrapped his bundle and put a black lump in Sim Chang Do's hand. It was very like a stone. It was a cake made of pine bark and sorghum bran. It was dried up and as hard as stone.

"Thousands of us, we and our dependents, have lived on this, hoping we would win our strike. Isn't this horrible? I think the fellow on our local Federation of Labour branch and the man by the name of Chong Sang Muk of Seoul who came down to lead our strike belong to different factions, and that, it seems, is why we lost the strike!"

The worker banged the floor with his fist and glared at Sim Chang Do as if he were branch leader from the Federation of Labour. And in fact, the miners' strike had been led by Chong Sang Muk sent down by the headquarters of the Federation of Labour. He had organized the strike to increase the influence of his faction, but when the situation got tough he simply cleared off back to Seoul. The local FL leadership, meanwhile, had remained aloof—the strike was run by Chong Sang Muk's faction, whom they hoped to see destroyed. Meanwhile it was the miners who suffered. They had sent their deputation up to Seoul, but they had found the FL headquarters was badly torn by factional strife that nothing had been decided or done.

"Well, enough of that; let's pick up the loads and go," cried a worker rising to his feet with his bundle. "We will go down and smash up the FL branch and act for ourselves. We'll stop them sticking their nose in, and rouse the labour organizations by our own effort. We have quite a few trade unions—the ox-cart-drivers' union, salesmen's union and we also have the spinning mill. Okay?"

He was followed up by others who stood up with a stir. The worker continued: "What have we to fear? Even the black-legs they've raked up are arguing hotly whether they should work or not. Let's try to approach them and win them over. They are Korean workers too. They can't have us kicked out, can they? We must confront the police and the company by a united front of all miners. We can achieve anything once we are ready to die."

The workers came out of the hall. They bade farewell to Sim Chang Do and Paek Sun Gi and then went to the kitchen to thank the landlady and kitchen maid for their food.

"Do you still think socialism is good, sir?" Paek Sun Gi asked Sim Chang Do after seeing off the workers.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, look at these people in the socialist movement. They fled, leaving those workers to face the music, didn't they?"

"That's them, not socialism."

"Yes, that's the socialist movement itself, sir."

"No, it isn't. I don't think so."

Sim Chang Do would not agree to Paek Sun Gi.

Paek Sun Gi sat in his room dejected for a long time, thinking of those workers. He picked up the black cake from the worker's bundle and placed it on the table. He put himself in their position. This is terrible, he said to himself. Everybody has to eat this, young and old. How can children eat this? They couldn't digest it even if their stomachs were lined with horse hide. They'll suffer agonies digesting this.

Paek Sun Gi jumped to his feet. He had a five-*won* note in his pocket and he had not thought to give it to the workers.

He raced out of the house and hurried down the alley out into the busy night street. He threaded through the stream of people and looked around. But the workers were nowhere to be seen. He ran to the tram stop, but he did not find them.

"They've gone."

Paek Sun Gi remained standing for a while, crestfallen. Then he turned and walked limply back. The street was loud with light and music—crooners and dancing neon signs. From the direction of Yongdungpo across the Han River came the booming of guns—probably the Japanese division stationed in the Ryong-san district were holding manoeuvres. They would menace Seoul like this at times, because they were still afraid of what was once the capital city of Korea.

That night Paek Sun Gi sat and stared at the black stone cake, deep in thought. He seemed to have witnessed how the downtrodden Korean populace were living. He had heard so many times that they were crying for food, dying of hunger, but he had never dreamed that this thing could be food for men.

Since that night, Paek Sun Gi had often pondered over the poverty of Korea. Unhappily he made his daily way to school, and back. One night about a month later the socialists were, as usual, gathered in the back rooms of the inn which were raided by the Jap police who started wholesale arrests. Police poured in from all directions, whistles blowing, and firing pistols. Many of the socialists escaped over the wall or hid in guest rooms in the front house. Sim Chang Do and Paek Sun Gi and several gentlemen in Western clothes staying in some of the front guest rooms were arrested. Paek Sun Gi was thunderstruck. He had a very rough time in the police lockup. Every day, they dragged

him out, made him drink gallons of water, burnt his skin with a red-hot skewer and twisted his limbs.

They thought Paek Sun Gi as socialist and kept asking him which faction he belonged to; they also asked him what connections he had with the Korean Communist Party, what he had done and who instructed him. A massive thug sat on his belly, and pinched his nose and squeezed his mouth to pour in water and red pepper. Paek Sun Gi was tortured for a month before they let him go. When he returned back to the inn, he learned that Sim Chang Do was under indictment. The inn's license was revoked and it was not allowed to receive guests. But Sim Chang Do's kindhearted wife was shocked to see the state he was in and busied herself, looking after him. And it was at this time, while he was still under treatment, that the telegram arrived informing him of his father's sudden death. In utter despair, Paek Sun Gi caught a northbound train.

Looking back on his life in Seoul, it seemed like a nightmare. Everything was confused. He remembered Chang In Uk's thinning silver hair, Han Chang Bok and the bell that they had rung by the Han River, the red nose of the detective who had poured pepper-water into his mouth and the black cake from the worker's bundle. At times it all became mixed up as it whirled round and round in his head.

No doubt, it was an important experience, he thought, for it shocked me, shocked to the core. Something is telling me, telling me about things that will have a great bearing on my whole future life. What is it? Why am I so scatter-brained? Wasn't Comrade Kum Song right? Isn't it true as he said, that I would only find the road to the future when I fully grasped the terror of the present situation in Korea, knew what our country was asking for, what our downtrodden people were crying for? If, as a young Korean, I am to fight to save the nation and bring happiness to the Korean people, I cannot turn away from the cruel reality, the chaos, and the mountain of critical and painful problems. How can you find a way if you divorce yourself from these problems? If I look for any other road, I will not be helping to win independence for Korea nor yet to solve any of Korea's terrible problems.

"Though each one may have a different point of departure, we all live in this country in this age. If we are patriotic, love our nation, and if we are truly concerned about our country's destiny, we all inevitably will end up with the same idea. In the

long run, the purpose of the independence movement is to solve the problems of our country in our time."

Comrade Kum Song had explained this to him very earnestly, and he could still hear his voice. Haven't I arrived at the very idea, then, after all? he thought. Where, then, should I go? Should I turn to socialism, following Comrade Kum Song?! Socialism, socialism, that I kept avoiding! I must think seriously about it. If socialism and communism will save those terribly ill-treated workers, then they must be right and just. Then justice and truth.... Paek Sun Gi felt as if something sparkled in his head, and he sat up in bed.

Justice, truth...what is truth? What is the definition of truth? I must think it over. The just desire to save those poor workers, the call of human life and human ethics. Well, isn't that real truth?

Paek Sun Gi thought he had found something great. It was not yet clear to him, but he felt as if he was seeing something very precious, the very point that human intellect is bound to reach.

CHAPTER XIII

LIFE IS HOPEFUL

1

A small blackboard hung on the wall. Kang Ban Sok was writing on it with a piece of chalk. The room was full of Women's Association members copying things down from the blackboard. Many had babies on their backs and all had notebooks on their laps; several of the women kept licking their pencil points like small children.

Yong Ju sat among the women copying, too. He looked up at the blackboard with eyes clear as the morning star and wrote down several characters at a time; he wrote as quickly as his mother and in a flat hand.

"You must get used to writing characters distinctly; don't try to write too fast. You should never scribble."

When she had finished writing on the board, Kang Ban Sok made the rounds to see how well the women were doing.

"You are writing much better now, Chang Sun's mother, but look here, you've made spelling mistake. Not *nun*, but *dun*."

"Oh dear, they do look alike...."

All the women laughed.

"Well now, let us read. Read, sister from the back house. Your reading has been rather poor. Let's see how well you do tonight."

Bun's mother, the "sister from the back house" blushed and stuttered out what she had written in her notebook. She always drew a laugh, because she prefaced every phrase she read with "um" or "er" like a child and sometimes added "so that" into sentences. But tonight she did very well.

"We women must fight the feudal system. Under the feudal system women are not regarded as human beings; it is a system that shackles women, treats them as subhuman. We must fight

this system and we must work for equal rights with men. So that...."

The "so that" drew a big laugh from the whole class.

"My goodness. I'll have to sew up my lips...."

Bun's mother was furious with herself and her face went bright crimson.

"Won't you want to eat?"

"You may say 'so that'. So that we must study hard. Okay? Ho ho ho."

There was another peal of laughter among the women.

Kang Ban Sok had started up this evening school soon after she got her son's letter. Since then she had worked hard to train the Women's Association's inner circle to extend the organisation and educate the people. With the result that the Women's Association was striking roots in many villages in the Fusung area—evening schools had opened in quite a few villages.

Mother often sent active members to the villages and sometimes went out herself to help the organisations. She had also to prepare all the teaching materials for the school. She picked out passages from newspapers or books, mostly concerning practical problems. The teaching material included not only women's emancipation, but subjects such as how to fight superstition, educate children, eliminate illiteracy and form the Women's Association branches; it was used at the evening school where she herself taught and sent out to other evening schools as well. These issues interested the women at all the evening schools.

After Bun's mother, other women took their turn to read. They were doing pretty well, even though total illiteracy was not long behind them. Kang Ban Sok looked at every notebook—many of the women could not yet write well.

"Learning how to write from others is no easy job. But anything depends how much you take care. Look, the letter ㄝ is written like this."

Kang Ban Sok guided a woman's hand to help her correct some bad spelling.

"Please check mine too, Mother."

"You are not an evening school pupil. You are a teacher compared with these mothers here...."

Mother Kang Ban Sok just ruffled Yong Ju's hair but she would not look at his notebook. Actually, Yong Ju learned well, and these days he did liaison work that his mother assigned him.

Sometimes he even went to a neighbouring village ten *ri* away, to carry instructions from the Saenal Juvenile Union for his brother Chol Ju, and his mother always praised him for it.

After checking all the exercise books Kang Ban Sok began to teach reading, pointing to the blackboard.

"We women...."

"We women...."

"Must fight"

"Must fight"

The women repeated in unison.

"Don't read carelessly; you must watch the characters and read. For example, when you read 'we', you must look at the 'w' and 'e' so that they become familiar to your eyes. Must fight."

"Must fight"

"Against the feudal system."

"Against the feudal system."

The voices rang round the room. After the reading practice, Kang Ban Sok made them copy what they had been reading into the exercise books. Then she switched to explaining the meaning of what they had been reading, talking with great conviction. She gave examples to explain how men were respected and women disdained under the feudal system and why and how under the Japanese imperialists, Korean women were subject to two and three-fold oppression and exploitation. The women saw a hard look on the face of their teacher who was usually so kindhearted.

When the lesson was drawing to a close, the door opened and Comrade Kum Song's smiling face appeared to their surprise. He held his cap in one hand and a bundle of books in the other. The sweat on his brow glittered in the light.

"How did you get here at this late hour?" asked his mother, stepping forward from the blackboard.

"How are you, Mother?"

"I am all right, but you should have written to me before you came."

"It couldn't be helped. You must excuse me for interrupting your lesson."

"Not at all. But it must have been difficult to make this journey at night."

The women took his bundle and put it down in the room. Still standing on the earthen porch, Comrade Kum Song wiped

his face with his handkerchief, while Yong Ju ran forward and clung to his eldest brother.

"Brother."

"Oh, Yong Ju."

"Have you come for your holidays?"

"Yes...."

"Are you going to stay long?"

"Yes, I am."

The women all got up and put away their things hiding their exercise books so that nobody would see their ungainly characters, and those women who had put their babies down, now picked them up and stood there holding baby, blanket and belt on their arms.

"Did you come all the way on foot at this ungodly hour?"

"No. I came by carriage up to five *ri* away from here."

"I heard about the death of Mr. Paek Rak Jin."

"I thought you had."

And neither mother nor son said another word about Paek Rak Jin's tragic death.

"Why are you standing? Do sit down," Comrade Kum Song said as he came into the room and saw the women rising to their feet with a stir.

"That is because you have come. Let us be seated and have talk a while longer."

As Kang Ban Sok said this, all the women sat down again. During this general murmur in the room, Yong Ju slipped out unnoticed. He ran down the dark hill to where Chol Ju was supposed to be rehearsing a play, to tell him right away that their eldest brother had come home. When he reached the bottom, Yong Ju turned, ran round the mud wall of a large peasant home and then on for quite some distance, down a cul-de-sac at the end of which was the L-shaped house where the play was in rehearsal. Yong Ju peeped in through a crack and found that they were not rehearsing but playing a drum and a mouth organ.

"Oh, how wonderful...."

And with the drum and mouth organ, he heard a *chodae* flute. The strange tune excited the boy, who came closer to the earthen porch and took a good look at the scene inside the room, which was packed with children and young people. Most of the youngsters were long haired. A shortish boy stood there, pursing his lips as he played the *chodae* flute, and beside him

the white-faced Yang Si Hwan was playing the mouth organ. He held it in his mouth and his cheeks went in and out like bellows.

"Oh, they do play well...."

For quite a while, Yong Ju watched those bellows-cheeks of Yang Si Hwan's. And there, to his surprise, he saw his brother Chol Ju standing beside Yang, beating a drum. He had a large cowhide drum attached to his chest and his two hands moved rhythmically, as he beat the drum with two sticks, and from time to time he hit the rim, while his left hand almost imperceptibly touched the instrument. The rhythm of the drum and of his movements were so much part of each other that it seemed like magic.

Presently they stopped playing and Yong Ju opened the door and went in.

"What are you here for?" asked Chol Ju.

"Our eldest brother is home."

"Our brother? When did he get here?"

"Just now."

Yong Ju stared at his brother with his serene eyes.

"Your brother has come? You're not having me on, are you?"

"Go and see for yourself. I'm not fibbing," returned Yong Ju with a sharp look at this doubting Thomas. This raised quite a laugh.

There was a stir in the room and they were all excited.

"How lucky! I'm sure he has come to help us with our Juvenile Union."

"Right. He has written how many times to us I don't know, telling us how to start up our Saenal Juvenile Union."

The teenagers and children here were all members of the Saenal Juvenile Union formed by Comrade Kum Song in the winter after his return from Hwasong Uisuk School, before he went to Kirin. He had done a lot of work for this union—he had formed a reading group, a story-telling group, had arranged lectures and encouraged them to play soldiers. Besides using the union to educate the members, he had formed a music and drama troupe to tour the villages, as part of the campaign to educate the masses.

The organization had grown firmer roots, the membership had snowballed and many of them had started reading Marxist-Leninist literature. And it was spreading in the surrounding villages not just in the town of Fusung.

Now the youngsters all surged out of the room with a great deal of noise; they stopped the rehearsal saying that they must go to meet Comrade Kum Song. Yang Si Hwan who had played the mouth organ, a leader of the local SJU walked at terrific speed at the head of the group. Indeed they all walked so fast that Yong Ju had to grit his teeth and run to keep up.

Both rooms of Kang Ban Sok's house seemed to be bursting at the seams. They were already crowded with the women evening school students, who had since been reinforced by the members of the SJU.

"Come in, all of you. Come in, if you can squeeze in. We'll have to stretch the house a bit tonight."

Comrade Kum Song got up and shook hands with every member of the SJU.

"I wish your house were a bit bigger, Sister."

"A small house makes the family love each other more. Anyway, Koreans are in no position yet to live in big mansions." Kang Ban Sok answered the women.

Chol Ju came down to the boarded floor of the kitchen and asked his mother if his uncle had come back yet.

"He said he would come back tomorrow evening. So how could you expect him so early?"

"Do you know where he went?"

"He went to Fenghuo-tung, saying he would help in the Women's Association work there. And how would I know which way he would go after that?"

"They say the Youth Corps members have been fighting among themselves in Maoshan-tung," said Chol Ju, with an anxious look.

"Maoshan-tung? Isn't that where a Youth Corps was set up and they all swaggered about? Uncle won't go there. But why were they fighting?"

"Probably a factional fight. Some travellers who came from there today said it was a big fight."

"Oh, what a shame! What's the point of the Koreans fighting Koreans? It would be better to fight the Japs..." lamented Kang Ban Sok.

That night Comrade Kum Song sat with the boys and children and asked for a full account of the work done by the SJU. Sitting beside him, Yang Si Hwan gave him a detailed report on the work. The young man with a fair face had a broad forehead. Looking at a leather-covered book he held, he went into the

minutest details—the number of the members in the enlarged groups, the number of performances and public meetings. He was a passionate and able youth, well equipped to lead.

"Well, how many members are there in Sunghua-tung?"

"Twenty-two in all."

"Who is in charge there?"

"Li Gyong Bok. You know him, don't you?"

"I do. And what books are the members reading now?"

"Marxist books. And they read absolutely everything—news-papers, magazines, novels. I give them specific assignments. And I ask them to give a written account of what they have read...."

"What novels do they read?"

"Revolutionary novels. I don't allow them to read love stories." Yang Si Hwan replied, straightening his posture.

Comrade Kum Song grinned and looked at his face, and blushing, Yang Si Hwan rubbed his forehead with his handkerchief. He used to read piles of love stories himself at one time, and Comrade Kum Song had given him a serious talking-to about it.

When the union members went their different ways it was nearly dawn. But just as Comrade Kum Song was about to close his eyes, Kim Hyong Gwon returned.

"Who could this be!" exclaimed he in a husky voice, pulling away at his frozen shoes.

"Yes, I am back, Uncle. Where did you come from at this hour?"

Comrade Kum Song went over to him. He held his uncle's hand and came into the room.

"It's terribly cold. Look, can you help me take off this fur cap first, my eyes are blurred and I can't see properly."

Comrade Kum Song lost no time in helping him. The fur cap was covered in frost and a chain of little icicles dangled from the fur.

After a while Kim Hyong Gwon said his face was warming up and he rubbed it vigorously with his stiff frozen fingers. He had a scar as big as a copper coin on his forehead, which he always covered with a lock of hair, and as soon as the fur cap came off, it fell into place over the scar.

"You must have had great difficulties, keeping running the household going...."

"I don't do any of it. It's your mother that has all the troubles. Oh, yes, I was told about Paek Rak Jin, but I could not go

to the funeral. So he went to Changchun, without knowing that Yu Sang Jo was a spy?"

"It was awful. He was too simple and trusting."

"Yes, if you take it in its better sense."

"That's why Koreans must learn just how crafty the Japs are."

"My brother was right. He said that in practice you must always check people. Because if you don't, you won't discover the spies—after all they don't go around telling people that they are spies. How I long for my dead brother at times like this," said Kim Hyong Gwon with a sigh.

Kang Ban Sok was already busy preparing breakfast, and the kitchen was full of steam. Bun's mother next door had hurried up with cooking her breakfast to come over to help Kang Ban Sok.

"You shouldn't take all this trouble. Don't you think I can cook for myself?"

"But your son has come from Kirin—it must be quite a headache to prepare just the meal you want to for him."

Bun's mother remembered that last winter when she had been sick in bed, Kang Ban Sok had fetched the water from a distant well and cooked the meals for her family. Not only that. She would boil thick rice soup gruel for little Bun and feed her every day. Sometimes she boiled the rice soup on the brazier in her own house and came rushing over carrying a bowl of boiling soup. Bun's mother did not know how to repay such kindness.

"Sister, do you think that's really enough rice? Your brother-in-law has come back too," said Bun's mother as she opened the pot and stirred the rice with a gourd ladle. She thought there wasn't enough cooked rice.

"If it's not enough, we'll just have to manage. In the kitchen I don't bother to eat my fill."

"But how can you do that?"

"Why not? When you have a lot of rice, you eat a lot, and when you haven't got a lot you eat a little."

This was the way she had lived all her life. While she was in Kangdong, Linchiang, Pataokou and Fusung, visitors had come almost every day. They had come in the morning, in the evening or at night. They were not ordinary visitors; they came from far afield for instructions, reporting on their missions, carrying messages or bringing supplies of arms—everybody fought for the

independence of Korea. How could she treat them slightly? Sometimes she cooked two or three meals at night, and often skipped her own before she went to bed. And when she got up in the morning she would feel dizzy and weak and totter when she tried to stand. At such times she would pull in her skirt strings.

Mother Kang Ban Sok put some charcoal in the brazier and brought it into the room to warm her brother-in-law who had returned at dawn. Bun's mother shot a quick look at her from behind.

I wish to God I could have some money! Bun's mother thought. I am unable to make such a sister comfortable....

Tears welled up in her eyes.

2

After breakfast Kim Hyong Gwon told them what the young people were doing in the villages he had visited around Fusung. About a month ago, Comrade Kum Song had written to Kim Hyong Gwon advising him to see how matters stood with the youth around Fusung, as a first step in his far-reaching plan to organize the young people in Antu, Fusung, Tunhua and other areas around Mt. Paekdu-san in a revolutionary mass organization. He had spent most of his time since then in villages near Fusung, and wherever he went, he had also given advice to the Women's Association branches Kang Ban Sok had organised, and had learnt quite a lot about the mentality of the youth and what they were doing. Wherever there were evening schools, he had taught and given lectures on the need for the Korean people to fight the Japanese imperialists.

"At any rate, we cannot leave the area around Fusung as it is now," said Kim Hyong Gwon. "As you know, this part has been under a strong nationalist influence and now the young people have lost confidence in those outworn ideas, and they are looking for a new way to fight. But a whole gamut of factions is working on them, each to entice them into their own fold. The Tuesday group is creeping in, so is the M-L group, and various nationalist groups are also manoeuvring around. So how can all that end? It's quite obvious that they will be divided

into factions and fight each other. We can't leave them in such an appalling situation. We must get them all to unite, otherwise we won't be able to do anything."

Kim Hyong Gwon talked excitedly. He had spent years in the revolutionary movement. When his brother Kim Hyong Jik was alive, he had worked under his guidance, had done anything demanded by the revolution, making countless journeys at home and abroad. He would transport weapons and convey instructions, walking hundreds of *ri* a day. When he was carrying arms, he used to cross high mountains and sleep in the cold dew at night. He had travelled through many fierce storms. Perhaps that was why every word he uttered seemed to carry the weight of his unflinching character and spirit, tempered by the revolution.

"At present, Maoshan-tung and the surrounding area is the centre of the factional in-fighting. There are already Youth Corps there, but they are not united because members of these factions have wormed their way into the leadership, all dreaming different dreams in the same bed. Recently a short training course was organised at Maoshan-tung, and rumour has it that there was a fight there in which many limbs were broken and heads cracked. We must deal with that pandemonium first of all. That stronghold...those dirty swine."

"You are right, Uncle. We can't leave the situation as it is. So I think I shall work here during my holidays. My comrades will come from Kirin in a few days," Comrade Kum Song said, after listening carefully to all his uncle wanted to say.

"I think I understand. I guessed you had some plan when I received your last letter. And I was told that Kirin is astir now, so if we advance in Kirin and Huatien and also here, we will be building up a foothold for the Korean revolution step by step. That is very encouraging."

"Go to sleep now, Uncle. You don't look too well."

"Maybe because I haven't had much sleep for several nights."

Comrade Kum Song went down to the boarded floor of the kitchen so that his uncle could get to sleep. He was very well satisfied to know that his uncle was working with such vigour.

Young men flocked to the house at Hsiaonanmen Street. The number was greater than usual because Comrade Kum Song was home. And they stopped to hear his views about the international situation, the situation at home and about the

movement. They laughed and made a lot of noise in lower and upper rooms. Some young men went into the kitchen to give Kang Ban Sok a hand, and others went out to the yard to chop firewood.

"Honestly, you needn't do all that. Sit down and hear the stories and have debate."

"Mother, you are our Mother. Do you think we are helping strangers?" The young people would retort and go on helping Kang Ban Sok.

At times they held debates on *Capital* and at times on Gorky's novel *Mother* which Comrade Kum Song had sent his own mother. After Kang Ban Sok had read it, it had circulated among the youngsters and all of them had read it. Chol Ju had read it over and over again. Sitting in a corner of a roomful of young people, Chol Ju was reading, without blinking his long lashes.

At nights Comrade Kum Song would go out with his mother to visit villages around Fusung. Comrade Kum Song asked her about the activities of the Women's Association, and taught her how to run the organisation and how to do propaganda work. He also visited some places where he gathered Women's Association members and held meetings or gave talks. When her son spoke at any meeting or gave a talk, Kang Ban Sok watched his every movement or jotted down his words on her notebook.

Some evenings, he would walk dozens of *ri* through a snow-storm with his mother.

"It's frozen here, Mother."

"Never mind."

"Give me your hand, I'll hold it."

His mother held out her hand and her son took it, to lead her across the slippery ice.

"You speak well, but I can't God knows why. If I am to work for the revolution, I must speak well, too...."

"Mother, there is nothing special about speaking. One just has to say what one thinks. It is not that difficult. You can speak as if you were talking at table. You are a good talker, aren't you?"

"But the success of formal speech seems to depend on your boldness. You mustn't be frightened in front of the people."

"That's right, Mother. The people are near and dear to us. Like members of the same family. They have the same idea and feelings and the same desires, they are the closest in the family. So when you make speeches, you should speak easily, just as if

you were talking to your own family."

"But it is hard to speak easily."

"Of course, it might be hard. But you only lack a little skill as yet. Before speaking out, you must prepare an outline of what you are going to say. And when you touch on some difficult point, amplify it; you should give many examples; and when you wind up your speech, you should reiterate the main points. One must never speak for the sake of speaking. Even if your speech is short, it must have a lot of content and meaning and must be in keeping with revolutionary activity."

He would often give his mother lessons on how to make speeches. Whenever she walked with her son, Kang Ban Sok's heart was filled with delight. Though a snowstorm was on the rampage and it was dark all round, she walked as if walking through a bright and warm place, and she walked with a light step as if a happy world was near ahead.

One snowy evening Chae Gyong and Pak Gwang Sik arrived from Kirin. As they had promised, they brought a bundle of new Marxist-Leninist books. The whole house was animated and the two young men who had broken through the snow were warmly welcomed. Kang Ban Sok took Chae Gyong's leather shoes to the fireplace in the kitchen and wondered how he had covered such a distance in these heavy shoes. They were leather only in name. Chae Gyong had been given them by a Law School friend, who told him that his uncle had worn them when he was in the Independence Army and that they would fit Chae Gyong's huge feet. They were too big, though, even for Chae Gyong. And they were in really bad shape now—the heels and sides had been sewn up over a dozen times. Yet Chae Gyong had come here from the far-off Kirin by foot in these shoes.

Pulling a hard lump of ice off one of the shoes Kang Ban Sok felt a lump in her throat. When will these young people win back our country and free themselves from this hardship? she wondered. That day I shall have to make shoes of something soft and light as silk and put them on the feet that have become used to shoes like these, so as to ease the pain in my heart.

"Which school are you at?" she asked Chae Gyong after supper.

"The Law School, Mother."

"Do you have parents at home?"

"Both of them are dead. I have a sister."

"So brother and sister keep the house?"

"Yes."

She looked at Chae Gyong's face calmly. His conspicuously high cheek bones seemed to be marked by the hardships of life and his hands were roughened by years of drudgery.

"You brother and sister must have had great difficulty in keeping your heads above water in this cruel world. Your shoes alone show how tough you have been living. But we are working for a revolution to free ourselves from such hardships, so you should fight on in spite of all your troubles."

"You are right, Mother. I am fighting with that resolve," replied Chae Gyong. He had an odd, tight sensation in his nostrils. Then he added that from now on, he would regard her as his own mother and would come to Fusung often.

"Please do. Then I shall be very happy, too. And I hope you work well for the revolution come what may."

Chae Gyong was unboundedly happy. He looked at the faces of all the family in the room. Where could you find a family like this one, whose members—son, mother, uncle and brothers—had all taken the revolutionary road, supporting and trusting each other and fighting with such noble spirits? Chae Gyong felt a warm feeling at the bottom of his heart.

The day after Chae Gyong's arrival, Comrade Kum Song gathered a few dozens of progressive young people in the area, who had been under Kim Hyong Gwon's influence, and encouraged them to form the Paeksan Youth League. In view of the situation in this area which the muddy waves of factional strife had begun to reach, he had planned to set up a new youth organisation quickly that would take in progressive young workers and peasants and also wider sections of the younger generation who had had ties with nationalist organisations and the Independence Army. He had been corresponding with his uncle about this. Now his plan was being put into practice.

Soon after the Paeksan Youth League had been formed, he opened a debate on how to extend it. The youngsters who filled up both rooms in the house, were all astir with excitement far into the night.

Having wound up the meeting, Comrade Kum Song got working on another of his ideas. It was to start a newspaper called *Saenal* to increase the young people's national and class awareness.

All through the night, together with Chae Gyong and some others, Comrade Kum Song sat up in the dancing lamplight, writing a message on the first issue of the paper as well as articles and educational material.

"Don't you have anything for me to do?" the mother, still awake, asked her son, looking at him writing in the corner of the room.

"Go to bed and sleep, Mother. You needn't help us."

"But it isn't easy to produce a newspaper. Your uncle has been up all night in the other room, working the duplicator. If there's anything I can do, give it to me."

"You will have a lot of things to do for this newspaper. Newspaper work does not end with the printing. What is important is to get it distributed to the people. I'm going to make arrangements for distribution, and you'll be doing a fair-sized share."

"With pleasure. For it carries the voice of revolution," his mother said, delighted, as she pulled the lamp wick up.

The SJU members rehearsed their show every night.

Yong Ju had come to see their rehearsal, but now he was also going to do something in the show. They had had a go at him until finally Yong Ju had been persuaded to sing a song. And it won enthusiastic applause. So tonight they made Yong Ju sing again, accompanied on the mouth organ and *chodae* flute, which gave depth and quality to his clear voice. It was a gentle, lovely voice, though it seemed rather strained at first. When he had finished he even raised his hand to salute. The youngsters in the room applauded and demanded an encore. So having once stood up, Yong Ju had to sing several songs before he finally sat down.

The rehearsal of a short play was always interesting and caused a lot of laughter. Entitled *A Letter from Mother*, the play was about ending illiteracy. It was a story about a married woman who received a letter telling her that her mother was coming. As she could not read it, she chased off to look for someone who could. She met a gentleman in Western clothes and asked him to read it for her, but unfortunately he was also illiterate. He was so upset about this that he began to cry. Immediately she thought the letter contained some awful news, so she, too, burst out sobbing. While the two were crying, another man appeared. He stopped short, saw the letter and also started crying because obviously the letter must contain

unhappy news. The crying was reaching a comic climax, when a fourth person entered, and read the letter aloud. Only then the three others were all ashamed and blushed.

They saw it in rehearsal every day, but every time the youngsters saw it they held their sides with laughter. Because the actors were getting more and more skilled at crying. They had tried hard to cry in various ways and had developed it to such a pitch that their crying looked quite real.

After duplicating the first issue of the *Saenal* newspaper, Comrade Kum Song sent young people out to different places while he himself left for Maoshan-tung with the show.

"Well, let us put on a really good performance." Comrade Kum Song said helping the youngsters onto two horse-driven sleighs. Yong Ju was among the youngsters. Yong Ju jumped with joy at his eldest brother's recognition. The sleighs left Fusung, the youngsters beating drums and gongs. A streamer inscribed with FUSUNG YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S TROUPE fluttered over the first sleigh.

The sleighs came to a plain covered with glittering snow. The sun was as clear as silver bowl and though the wind was cold still, it seemed to carry a breath of spring. The horses ran, snorting. The first sleigh was pulled by two chestnuts, both of them rather fat. They ran well, shaking their heads, without being whipped by the drivers. The first sleigh carried the younger ones, and Comrade Kum Song was with them. Now they started singing on the sleighs. Comrade Kum Song too joined the chorus.

*Red ties around their necks
They go training carrying loads.
How splendid is Corps, Children's Corps.
Everybody loves the Children's Corps, Children's
Corps.*

From the second sleigh the drummer, mouth organ and *chodae* flute players started to play and everybody sang.

The sleighs glided over the dazzling snow carrying the songs. It looked as if the harbingers of spring were visiting this snow-covered and wind-swept land.

"Life is hopeful. Laugh and smile! However cold, dark and bleak the land, however great your sorrows. Spring will come and you must laugh as you jump down for the decisive battle

for the new spring. Come and do battle, shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand, sharing your sorrows. Laugh aloud and come to fight! Ha ha ha."

As the sleighs raced on, scattering laughter, the whole plain danced with vigour and hope.

As the sun dipped over the horizon the gay horse-driven sleighs arrived at Maoshan-tung. Comrade Kum Song had decided to drive them to this divided village first, this village where there had been factional fighting, to spread the seeds of new hope into the minds of the young people and rally them in one new organisation.

Maoshan-tung looked as bleak as a house in turmoil and it looked as if a hurricane had passed over. The Youth Corps here had held a short training course and the melee had taken place when the Tuesday and M-L groups in the leadership had attempted to use this training course to extend their influence. The fight had been so fierce that the auditorium of the school, where the training course was held was stained with blood. Therefore, the young people in Maoshan-tung had denounced the Youth Corps leadership as dirty and dissolved the corps that they had organised. And the adjacent villages had followed their example. Frightened by the young people's reaction, the much-divided leadership had fled from Maoshan-tung.

And at present, everybody in Maoshan-tung, young and old, was cursing them out loud.

It was around this time that the Fusung Youth and Children's Troupe arrived. The horse-driven sleighs sped down the road to the entrance of the village. As they drove in they all started playing their instruments—the big and little drums, gongs, the mouth organ and the *chodae* flute. They did not try to tune up: they just played to make as big a noise as possible. It had been planned to make the villagers stare and then to introduce themselves and explain the purpose of their visit. Everybody was in high spirits.

"What's that noise? More trouble in the village?"

"Something is going to happen after that fight."

The people of Maoshan-tung, who had been thunderstruck by the great fight, were pop-eyed now. They had witnessed three men getting their skulls bashed in and carried off by others that night. So, hearing such a noise, they feared there might be more and similar trouble. But as they heard peasants' music, they all ran out of the houses, young and old, children

and housewives, till the road to the school was crowded.

"Ha ha ha. This looks as if it might be fun."

The people were all smiling and sighing with relief once they saw that it was merry-makers, not more trouble.

"Fusung Youth and Children's Troupe. They look a nice lot."

"O look at that drummer. He's dancing as he beats his drum, his sticks overhead."

"But look at the fingers of that *chodae* flute player next to the drummer. The middle finger is quivering unceasingly like a spirit."

"That finger holds the base note."

"Ha ha ha. Anyhow they play well."

Everybody stared at the horse-driven sleighs. The horses, too, looked elated, snorting, and shaking their glistening manes in the sunset glow. Then they were leisurely stamping their shod hooves on the ground by turns. Even the drivers felt like dancing, keeping time with their shoulders. One of them called out to some of the villagers that these were no ordinary merry-makers but were in the independence movement.

"Don't pass it on.... It is a secret," warned the driver.

The villagers were a bit taken aback. The very word "movement" reminded them of broken heads. And they nudged each other passing in whispers who these merry-makers were.

Meanwhile, the youngsters got off the sleighs and played pleasant music, showing all their skill. The drummer did not just beat drum; he passed the sticks between his legs and wielded them over his head. And the youngsters with the gong moved their shoulders rhythmically. The mouth-organists and flautists accompanied their playing with gestures. Music and movement combined to build up a merry atmosphere, and soon the villagers surrounded the musicians.

"Who are they?"

"A touring troupe, sir."

"Where are they from?"

"From Fusung, sir. Young men and children too."

"Hum...."

Beside a zelkova tree at the top of the hill near the school where that last bloody fight had been, an old man in a cotton *turumagi* was talking to the village head. The old man held a walking cane in his wrinkled hands. His body was emaciated but

his eyes had a sharp glint. At times he held his silver beard which fluttered in the evening wind down with his hand.

"What shall I do, Honourable Sir? Shall we receive them in our village?"

"Receive them. The young ones must have gone to a lot of trouble and then to come all this way. Go ahead and receive them."

"I understand, sir."

The head of the village hurried down the slope on which the shadow of the tree now fell. The music was still heard in the village and a huge crowd of people were very animated.

The old man remained standing at the top of the hill, watching the scene. He was Pak Sun Mu, who was respected by everybody in and around Maoshan-tung. The people here called him Honourable Sir. They did so because he was not only old but was held in high esteem. His hands were hard as wooden rakes from the farm work he had done all his life and he had a burning patriotic spirit. During the March the First Movement, he had led all the people from his home village to the township where the Japanese had their police station. Though he was old then, he was right up in the van of the demonstration, his long beard fluttering in the wind, shouting hurrahs until his throat got hoarse. He had stirred up the masses to throw stones at the Japanese police station and hit at the mounted military police with pitch forks. He had fought like this over a month. And as a lot of people were arrested, he wailed and hit at the ground, crying out why there was no leader in Korea who would lead them in this fight. Later he had barely managed to escape the Japanese surveillance and crossed the Tuman-gang River with his family to settle in this village of Maoshan-tung. Now he was farming for himself despite his age, while taking care of village affairs. He always beat his chest with indignation, wondering when we could rout out the Japs.

His personality was such that he had been more grieved than anybody over the awful incident at the school auditorium. At the time, he beat his chest and shouted out: "You, you young scoundrels, getting yourselves in such a mess; who will carry on the Korean independence movement? The Korean people will not be able to close their eyes even in their graves."

The shock had been too great, and he had neither eaten or slept for days.

On his return home, old Pak Sun Mu sat at the supper table restlessly; he was afraid that something might happen in the village, though he had advised them to receive the troupe. He could hear his neighbours were already leaving for the performance.

"I must go and see," he thought. "I feel uneasy. If the villagers are absorbed in anything worthwhile, that would be another matter, but...."

After supper the old man did not even smoke but took down from the rack his *turumagi* and put it on. He came to the school auditorium which was already fully packed with villagers. And the young villagers, already on intimate terms with the troupe, were animatedly helping them to prepare the stage. They put up the curtain, prepared light, carried in large filing cabinet, God knows for what.

Old Pak Sun Mu was ushered into a seat in the centre.

"Honourable Sir, they look polite and honest." The head of the village, who had talked with him on the hill, whispered into the old man's ear.

"Perhaps, they do," was all the old man said. People kept coming in. A few dozen teenagers from a village some five *ri* away, came arunning having heard the news, and pushed their way into the already packed auditorium.

Old Pak Sun Mu kept looking at the stage. He was not happy that his young villagers were mixing with the visitors. Why should they make such a fuss of them and help them kindly, yes, but oh so noisily, he thought. Ah, well, all young people are frivolous.

Presently, the curtain rose and Comrade Kum Song appeared on the stage.

"That young man is their leader, sir," the village head told him; he had gone to the front and moved about among the youngsters before he went back and squeezed himself into his seat. The old man did not answer, he just kept staring at the stage.

Comrade Kum Song said a few words of greeting and then talked for over an hour about the necessity for all the anti-Japanese forces to unite to drive the Japanese imperialists out of Korea. The audience, who had expected no more than a few words of greetings, were yet enthralled with this unexpected speech.

"Who is the young man?"

"They say he is Mr. Kim Hyong Jik's son."

"Is he, indeed? That accounts for it. He clearly has his father's spirit."

"Not only his spirit. His eloquence, too!"

"Which school does he go to?"

"I heard that he is studying in Kirin...."

Whispers began among the audience. Then somebody called for silence. Now the speech was going straight to their hearts. There was a dead silence. Comrade Kum Song's serious yet warm voice rang forcefully through the room. He made the audience listen and hold their breath and at times get excited and clench their fists.

"Excellent. I'm surprised. He is right."

The audience got excited and wondered in admiration, looking wide-eyed at the speaker. Old Pak Sun Mu coughed his dry cough and crossed and recrossed his legs. The silver beard quivered on his chest.

"All the anti-Japanese forces must unite. We must unite the entire forces, regardless of individuals or organisations, who oppose Japan—and drive the Japanese imperialists out of Korean territory. This is our first and foremost goal. Division means our death. What are you thinking of, seated in this auditorium where the marks of recent bloodshed are not yet dry? Do you believe this sort of thing can be tolerated in the independence movement? To believe that is a crime. The dirty factional act of trampling down the movement to gain control must be rooted out and the ground in which it has spread the roots must be turned over and cleansed. Workers who work hammer in hand, peasants who till the land, educated people, scholars, petit-bourgeois, rich people and Korean capitalists—all the forces who oppose the Japs must unite. All must unite, so that we 20 million Koreans become a single powerful force to chase the Japanese imperialists off our soil."

"Splendid! For the first time in my life I am witnessing the true Korean spirit!" shouted old Pak Sun Mu, hitting his knees. His whole body trembled with excitement, and not knowing what to do he kept mumbling "um, um" in admiration.

"He is an unusual young man, sir," said the head of the village.

But the old man did not reply, for he thought that the word unusual was hardly enough to describe the young man on the stage.

After the lecture came the show. The audience listened to the youngsters' songs, feeling their hearts beating faster. The songs were as beautiful as jade. With songs so cheerful and dynamic, the audience were just about to dance. Both soloists and the chorus drew encores. Yong Ju raised his hand and gave a lively salute. He stole a look at his brother Chol Ju who came to accompany him on a mouth organ. Chol Ju winked with his dark lashes to indicate that Yong Ju should take a step forward. The younger brother did so, looking up at his elder brother.

"Oh, how sweet!"

"They are brothers, those two."

"And the young man who made the speech is their elder brother."

"So there are three of them. A really unusual family."

The people spoke in undertones. Yong Ju got three encores. What the people wanted was to see Yong Ju's salute each time he sang, they continued to applaud. Old Pak Sun Mu who had never yet clapped in all his life clapped his large hands clumsily.

When it came to the sketch "A Letter from Mother", the old man exclaimed, "Excellent," and slapped his knees. Looking around at the laughing audience, the old man warned them that all those who were illiterate must take this play to heart. And yet, he himself laughed out until his lined forehead was brightened. When he saw the children's May-pole dance, the old man wanted it again. So the dance was repeated. There was a pole right in the centre of the stage to symbolize Korean independence, and the children dressed as worker, peasant, scholar, student and so on, went round and round the pole, weaving the varicoloured ribbons as they went, singing and dancing.

*Single-hearted, single-hearted,
Single-hearted are we
Single-hearted are we to drive
The Japanese imperialists away.*

Old Pak Sun Mu looked at the stage, craning his neck. In their deep sockets the orange apples of his shining eyes stared fixedly. He blinked at times, and though the deeply furrowed skin of his face did move, his eyes remained fixed on the stage so absorbed was he in this song and dance display.

"Um, yes, that has deep meaning; It is a good play."

"Expressing unity, sir," commented the head of the village. "Of course. Once all Koreans unite, there will be no more Japs around. Anyhow, this is an excellent show. This is no ordinary troupe. Their song and dance display is not ordinary at all. Nor is the sound of their drums."

Old Pak Sun Mu looked very pleased and crossed one leg over the other. The show had impressed the old man and indeed, all the people beyond measure. It had won their hearts, the more so that it came right after that bloody factional fight.

After the performance, all the audience were on their feet, applauding. Old Pak Sun Mu rose, too, to clap his hands. The people surged out into the playground but they did not disperse; they began to play peasant music. Young villagers who had brought their own instruments were playing now. All the people, happily excited, kept time with their shoulders.

Presently Chol Ju, Yang Si Hwan and others came running out into the playground, carrying their drums and gongs and joined the villagers playing their instruments.

An icy wind blew across the playground and the silver crescent moon looked down. It was late and it was cold, but the people were still making a lot of noise, forming a large circle. The young villagers, too, played well. Among their instruments *saenap* (a kind of clarinet) was conspicuous; the plaintive tune played by this rang out across the sky to the new moon.

"Thank you, thank you. You didn't bring a show. You brought a breath of spring, a spring wind that will blow independence to Korea. Splendid, splendid...."

Full of praise, old Pak Sun Mu sat in a classroom holding Comrade Kum Song's hand, shedding the tears of emotion. "Could there be anybody else at your age in all Korea as capable as you? Oh, this shows that the Korean spirit lives on, and I believe in it."

Old Pak Sun Mu wiped away a tear with the sleeve of his *turumagi*.

Outside a group dance was in progress. Many villagers joined and moved round and round, moving their arms rhythmically.

A new wind rose in Maoshan-tung. Next day, the instrumental peasant music was heard in a neighbouring village, then another, then another. And along with this music, branches of the Paeksan Youth League came into being just as the bamboo shoots rise out of the ground.

CHAPTER XIV

RAINSTORM IN THE CAMPUS

1

Winter turned to spring and almost unnoticeably spring turned to summer. The bare yellowish branches of the poplar beyond the earthen wall showed their first yellow-green and soon the thick leek-green leaves rustled in the wind.

They say that time passes by you unnoticed like a stray cat. But unlike the cat it does not drink up your milk—no, rather it brings you milk, fattens all it touches and, with a gentle lullaby, slips away again almost unseen. Time, nature, seasons—why do they come and go? How do they get there, who sends them and takes them away?

Paek Sun Gi lay in the parlour, looking at the poplar thinking such desultory thoughts. Today the poplar's branches dancing in the breeze were almost blue, and beyond it the white clouds floated gently like soap bubbles. There would be little wind up there, for a puff of cloud that looked just like a lap-dog stayed unchanged. His side began to ache so he turned over. There were some pictures on the walls, still the same pictures that his father had been fond of. He wondered why his father had kept the copy of Sin Saimdang's *Egg-apples*. It had not been there when he was left for Seoul. He thought that old Li Gap Mu had copied it and given it to his father—Li Gap Mu was very keen on pictures. There were Li Jong's *Bamboo in Wind* and Kang Hui An's *Landscape and People*. To Paek Sun Gi all these looked like something thrown out by the stream of time. Time flows and flows, and piles things up. But, though you rub your cheeks against them, neither new horns or new buds come out. It is a sad caress.

Presently Paek Sun Gi got to his feet. His side was no longer aching. He had not known it in Seoul, but here they had discovered that his collarbone had broken when that heavy man had sat on him

and squashed in his body to force him to drink pepper water. So he had needed treatment and had to put off going to Seoul.

Paek Sun Gi came out into the courtyard, walking stick in hand. A wisp of fresh air blew in and refreshed him. He went out into Niumahang Street and walked towards Tesheng Gate. Though dusk was approaching, the sun was still hot. He went up to Peishan Park; there were many people—young men in sports gear walking jauntily like athletes, others sitting in the shade and reading. Many benches were occupied by cheerful laughing women, dressed in pink, brown and light green, with the latest hairstyles, powder and rouge. The park was unusually colourful today, and the smell of perfume and powder assailing the nostrils. There were the usual storytellers—on holidays blind storytellers would come to the Buddhist temple to recite whole novels such as the *Tale of Three Kingdoms* and ask for alms, and conjurers and peddlers came to the fair in front of the main temple. The storytellers, however, drew the largest crowds.

And now, there were storytellers not just by the temple but all over the park. Not the blind storytellers reciting the old, old stories, but long-haired middle school and college students reading revolutionary novels, which were becoming very popular among the masses.

Today, as usual, there were student storytellers here and there, each surrounded by a crowd. On his way up, Paek Sun Gi stopped a while to listen to the "story" Cho Chang Jin from Wenkuang Middle School was reading. Cho Chang Jin was a lively reader who underlined his words with gestures and put over irony and sarcasm. Coming to exciting passages he would raise his hand and crack his fingers. His audience, which included students, workers, gentlemen and people of all kinds watched him as they listened. Women in flowery silk shoes and with brightly patterned parasols, listened attentively, shaking their pearly ear-rings. In the same tones he had used in the *Throne of Pine Kingdom* Cho Chang Jin often added his own comments to lay bare the nature of capitalists. But no one knew that these words were his own.

"Yes, capitalists are just that...."

The people listened, and made comments such as:

"A marvellous book and a good storyteller."

A policeman with protruding cow-ears came by on his rounds and went off, grinning. He thought it was just ordinary "storytelling". In the midst of his "storytelling" Cho Chang Jin noticed

Paek Sun Gi in the crowd and greeted him raising his hand and grinning. Paek Sun Gi nodded and winked to him to carry on.

Paek Sun Gi walked on a while across the lawn into the shade of a big shrine called the Kuantu Mausoleum. He was surprised to see the tall Pak Gwang Sik there storytelling wielding his enormous hand. In actual fact, he wasn't telling a story, he was speaking, castigating the capitalist class. He had started off by reading Maxim Gorky's *Mother* adding his own words sometimes, but presently it had turned to a radical speech.

Oh, hell, while all these ears are listening, I had better feed them, he had thought. So here he was, speaking passionately, jerking back his head. He had an ugly face, his eyebrows met over a large nose, giving the impression of a clumsy sculpture, though his now long hair did compensate to some extent. His audience were Koreans. Sometimes they clapped their hands in excitement. Then Pak Gwang Sik became more elated and spoke with greater fire. But whenever a policeman passed, he was reading—any of passages—out of his book.

The audience and the speaker had similar views on this, so every time a policeman showed his nose, the people gave him warning. The whole park was full of "storytellers", they had turned it into a centre of mass education, and the policemen were regarded almost as a joke.

Paek Sun Gi sat down on a bench in the shade.

This is surprising, indeed, thought Paek Sun Gi. They are dealing nicely with our rulers. And he looked over at the murmuring people, he noticed a crowd of people by the forest of silver poplars near a narrow crooked lane. They, too, kept laughing boisterously; the young storyteller there must be as sarcastic as Cho Chang Jin.

Paek Sun Gi pulled out a pamphlet he had taken from his sister's desk. It was old and had lost its cover and the title was no longer legible. It was about the October Revolution. And all the quotations from Marx or Lenin's remarks had been underlined with a red pencil, maybe by his sister or by someone else. Anyway, the booklet had obviously been much read.

For a good while Paek Sun Gi sat reading. Chang Tae Ho and Song Chun Bo, both former students' society officers, had given him a detail account of Comrade Kum Song's activities and the situation in Kirin. So he knew how, after Comrade Kum Song's arrival, all the students in Kirin had suddenly become involved with

Marxism and about the network of the organizations that was spread in Kirin and the surrounding area.

These things were, indeed, miraculous.

Paek Sun Gi had asked them if Comrade Kum Song was socialist. Giggling, they looked at him as if he was an idiot.

Paek Sun Gi sat there, thinking and sighing. They have based their movement on the same Marxian principles, he thought, yet they are utterly different from the Marxists in Seoul. How come that in the midst of this chaos they are managing to make such changes?

Paek Sun Gi sat there and wondered, groping to find his way.

Is socialism justice? It is. But is it really necessary to make a bloody revolution? It must be, if there are hostile classes in the world. But which are the hostile classes?

Paek Sun Gi took a step forward and one backward in his thoughts. And yet, he certainly was moving ahead.

But, one day, he got mad and sat up in bed, while he was talking to Chae Gyong who had called to ask how he was. Referring to the merger of the three groups, Chae Gyong said it was virtually the death knell for the nationalist movement. He protested against that expression, though he did admit that the movement was declining. He warned his friend not to describe his father's death in such a crooked way. He had done his best somehow to separate in his mind his dead father's virtuous life from the withering nationalist movement and Chae Gyong understood this. He smiled and got to his feet, seeing Paek Sun Gi's angry eyes.

This incident made Paek Sun Gi shrink still further. One day Comrade Kum Song came to see him. Paek Sun Gi sat up in bed and wiped his weary brow.

"How are you feeling?"

"I'm getting better, though I do seem to run a bit of a temperature in the afternoons."

"Do you go out for a walk in the mornings?"

"You cannot get better by going for walks."

"But you must go out for walks and read books; you must first have a desire to live, for your health depends largely on your mentality, you know."

"What is the point of going on living?"

"What do you mean? Does a young Korean have a right to throw himself away? That is a crime. While you think like that you will not get well. You must not abandon yourself or allow yourself

to become frustrated."

Paek Sun Gi was silent.

"I don't know why you are talking like this, but what would your dead father have thought? You must not just lie down. I am talking seriously. You must have confidence and open up your road. I do not know what life in Seoul offered you, because I have not yet heard from you about it, but you do need to analyse your experiences. I think you have never visited the homeland without reason."

Comrade Kum Song spoke very seriously. He had not heard from Paek Sun Gi himself, but he had heard that he had been arrested and tortured by the Japanese police from Paek Sun Hui. Since Paek Sun Gi had not told him, he did not ask him for the reasons, but he could imagine some of what had happened. And it was this that made him give such earnest advice. He continued to talk for quite a while before he took his leave.

Next day Paek Sun Gi got up from his nap to find the first volume of *Das Capital* on his desk. He picked it up and went into the best room.

"Who brought this?" he shouted to his sister who was in the kitchen setting the dinner table. For a few moments Paek Sun Hui carried on and pretended not to hear him.

"Who brought this?"

"I did."

"And who asked you to bring it?" Paek Sun Gi thundered, the hand that held the book trembling violently.

"Comrade Kum Song asked me to. But it's not only Comrade Kum Song who wants you to read it. I do, too."

"What? You want me to read it too?"

Paek Sun Gi glared at his sister with flaming eyes. He was shocked by her composure. Even his younger sister was turning on him now.

"So you, too, have fallen for socialism?"

"Yes, I am taking that road."

Dumbfounded, Paek Sun Gi stared at his sister for many moments, before he withdrew. His strength was gone and his whole body was shaking. With the book still in his hand he returned to the parlour. He put the book on the desk and went back to bed, with great sorrow in his heart.

Yet Paek Sun Gi did read *Das Capital*. He did not know how to go about returning it, so he had wrapped it in a newspaper and

put it in a drawer in his desk and locked it. Then he had gone to his sister's room and rummaged through her desk. He had hit upon the pamphlet about the October Revolution that he now held in his hands.

Paek Sun Gi stayed on that bench till dusk. He came down Pei-shan Park and came near the centre; near Niumahang Street he noticed a crowd of students in front of a rice-cleaning mill. All the students were coming out with a book apiece, talking noisily to each other. Paek Sun Gi went to take a look, thinking a new book shop had been opened there. In a room that seemed to have been the rice-cleaning mill office, several girl students were handing out books and talking, and Paek Sun Gi noticed his sister among them.

"Why, what on earth are you doing here?"

"What brings you here, brother?" asked Paek Sun Hui, blushing.

"I have been out for a walk. But what is this here?"

"A library set up by us students."

"A library?"

"For the students to study...."

Now Paek Sun Gi understood, and looked around. It was obvious that this library had been put together by the students. The shelves were patched up out of bits of board in all shapes and sizes, and a list of rules in fair writing, stuck up on the wall, looked quite new. They stipulated that the books could be taken out and returned on Saturday afternoons and that the returned books should be accompanied by the reader's own comments. The books, mainly social sciences or literature, seemed to be mostly second-hand, although there was a new one here and there. Some of the books were so worn that the covers had been replaced with the titles written on by hand.

"How long has this been open?"

"About a week."

"And it is all run by the students?"

"Yes."

Paek Sun Gi inspected the bookshelves for a long time. Paek Sun Hui was delighted that her brother was looking at the books. The other day when Comrade Kum Song had asked her to take him a copy of *Das Capital*, she had not been too keen, for she feared that he might simply throw it out. So she had only taken it when Comrade Kum Song had really prodded.

Later Paek Sun Hui had tried to find out if her brother was reading it. He had indeed read *Das Capital*, had sat up with it all night. But in her presence he had put on an act of not reading it. Now she was very excited at the thought that her brother was likely yet to reach the Marxist road. She would do best things for her brother.

"Sit down here, brother," said Paek Sun Hui, putting a stool down for him as he stood at the bookcase leafing through a book.

"Don't bother."

Paek Sun Gi shot a glance at his sister and went on reading remained standing up. Paek Sun Hui hurried to her friend and whispered.

"Yong Suk, my brother did read *Das Capital* instead of sleeping. And he read with great interest. But after reading it, he hid it somewhere and is pretending ignorance. I think I'll have to take him the next volume."

"Did he really read it? How do you know he didn't and just put it away?"

Yong Suk could hardly believe Paek Sun Hui, because she had been told he was a thoroughgoing nationalist.

"He didn't lay it aside. I looked through a crack in the door and saw him reading it, reading some of the pages two or three times, too. Comrade Kum Song keeps asking me to feed my brother with books."

"Look...."

Paek Sun Hui stopped short as Yong Suk nudged her. Paek Sun Gi turned round and came towards the girls, looking at the backs of books on the shelves.

"Which book would you like?"

"Well...."

"*Les Miserables*?"

"I've read it."

"Have you read *Resurrection*?"

"I have."

"Well what would you like?"

Paek Sun Hui was fidgeting like a child. Paek Sun Gi went on pulling out one book after another. Presently he picked out a novel entitled *Love in the Court* and said he would borrow it.

"My goodness, what on earth do you want to read that for?"

"What's wrong with it, then?"

"If you read books, you should read social science...."

"I prefer this."

So saying, Paek Sun Gi took the book and left. Leaning on his walking stick he walked towards the end of the wall of the post office.

"See? He reads love stories, not *Das Capital*. You only had to mention social science, and he cut you off."

"But he did read it. I saw him."

"Maybe he just flipped through the chapter headings."

"No, I can assure you he was devouring that text."

"You shouldn't let your family pride get the better of you like that," Yong Suk replied rudely, and for a while the two girls argued. But they agreed that, as Comrade Kum Song had said, they would have to pull Paek Sun Gi into the revolutionary movement.

"He must become a revolutionary. I intend to turn my father into a socialist, too."

"Ho ho ho. Oh yes. How nice it would be if your father becomes socialist and my brother."

They smiled at each other.

Yong Suk had always been determined to turn her doctor father Pak Sung Hun into a socialist.

They hurried into the back room and took volume two of *Das Capital* out of the secret library. Two boxes that looked like cupboards under the boarded floor of the back room were full of books that could only be lent to people on the list sent in by the YCL.

Paek Sun Hui carefully wrapped up the volume of *Das Capital* in a wrapping cloth and went home. Her brother was lying on his back on a straw mat spread under the poplar in the courtyard, reading *Love in the Court*, and avoided looking up as his sister came in. Paek Sun Hui went into the best room, opened her bundle, took out *Das Capital* and crossed the hall into the parlour. She put it on the desk and looked round for the first volume which her brother had finished reading. When she noticed that one of the drawers was locked, she went out, thinking that that was where it must be.

"Are you boiling red beans, mother?" Paek Sun Hui called out as she went into the kitchen—her mother was tending the fire in the fireplace in the yard.

"Yes. So you're back then?"

"Yes, mother."

"Why so late, it's Saturday...."

"Ho ho ho. We are busiest on Saturdays. My goodness, there is no water in the jar."

"Go and fetch some, then."

"I will."

Paek Sun Hui put on an apron and went out with a water jar under her arm. Paek Sun Gi was reading the book, still not caring to look at his sister.

"Hum, let's wait and see. Do you think we can't interest you in socialism? *Love in the Court* indeed. And what will you do with that?"

Paek Sun Hui said to herself on her way to the well. She was anxious to bring her brother into the socialist road, even if she had to pull his hand and push from behind. But Paek Sun Hui did not know that she was misunderstanding her brother. In fact Paek Sun Gi was reading Lenin's *State and Revolution*, not *Love in the Court*. When the students' library was being got together, students had given them a veritable mountain of books, books of every kind, and quite a few had covers that did not match the contents. Paek Sun Hui and her friends, who were in charge of the library, had not managed to go through them all before they started lending out. It had not occurred to either of them that *Love in the Court* might cover *State and Revolution*.

Soon the pages were dyed crimson by the setting sun. But Paek Sun Gi kept reading for he could not tear his eyes away.

2

That evening Comrade Kum Song caught the train at Chiaoho station. While Kirin was burning in the evening glow, there was heavy rain in Chiaoho and a fierce wind rose making it feel like an autumn evening.

Comrade Kum Song was seen off by Chong Bong Su, his wife with their baby on her back and several young men in wide-brimmed straw hats.

Chong Bong Su had been appointed head of the Chiaoho branch of the AIYL.

The train blew its whistle and began to move. All the young

people were so sorry to see Comrade Kum Song go that they ran along beside the moving carriage. Chong Bong Su was in front, taking off his straw hat as he ran.

"Thank you, sir, for coming here to advise us," Chong Bong Su called after him, now slightly tearful. The eyes of the young men following in his wake were also brimming with the tears.

"Learn well, all of you, Comrade Li Bong Guk, I'll send your book the moment I get to Kirin. Good-bye, Mrs. Chong."

Comrade Kum Song took off his cap and waved it. The young people, who could no longer keep up waved their straw hats and handkerchieves.

"Farewell," cried the wife of Chong Bong Su, and having followed a little way she made a low bow towards the train. Comrade Kum Song leaned out of the train and waved his cap.

The train pulled out of the platform and moved through a rustling sorghum field, puffing up clouds of smoke. Comrade Kum Song bent forward and looked across the field hoping to see his comrades, but the station was already out of sight.

Still on the platform of the train, Comrade Kum Song looked at the landscape. The sorghum swayed in the twilight, the long smooth leaves fluttering like wings. The silver poplars were swaying, the tree-tops bowing to the train and scattering leaves round like coins. One by one, the bigger stars came out between the clouds like diamonds in the sky—the tiny ones were nowhere to be seen.

The sky was as turbulent as the earth, the black clouds writhing. And behind these clouds the stars looked brighter still, like glowworms, mysterious living things.

Comrade Kum Song stood on the platform in a cheerful mood, his coat fluttering in the wind.

The gale subsided as they approached Kirin, and the clouds slowly rolled away. Now the sky was studded with a pattern of stars, big and little. The darkish blue heavens wrapped the earth in a vault that seemed so near that you felt that you could touch a corner with a long pole, and scatter the blue diamonds and make an echo across the whole sky.

Comrade Kum Song entered the carriage and sat down, sunk in thought. Meditation is always pleasant. He closed his eyes and saw a blue ocean with coral columns here and there. Uncounted forests of corals—Huafien, Fusung, Kirin, Kuyushu, Chialun, Tunhua, Liuho, Harbin. To which he now added Chiaoho.

A seed had been planted in a new area. A healthy seed. There was no doubt that fierce flames of struggle would rise in this area of Chiaocho very soon.

Early last summer he had been writing for the second issue of *Saenal* which had to be sent to Fusung. He had heard that his leading article on the inauguration of the newspaper carried in the first issue had caused a lot of stir, had influenced many teenagers and children and even grown-ups, so he had worked late into the night on an article that would arouse their anti-Japanese patriotic ideas and their class consciousness. At the dead of a night a young man nearing 30, Chong Bong Su had arrived with his hair unkempt wiping away his perspiration. He sat stiff and upright as he explained why he had come at such an hour.

"Make yourself comfortable," Comrade Kum Song had said. "Why do you sit like that?"

"That's all right, I am comfortable as I am," Chong Bong Su had answered adding that he had a burning desire to work for the revolution, but was dissatisfied with the situation in Chiaocho, which was why he had come here for advice.

"What organisations are there in Chiaocho?"

"We have one called the Ryosin Youth Association to which most Chiaocho youths belong but it does nothing. When we all joined we had great hopes that we might take a crack at the Japs and help win independence for Korea, but there seems to be no prospect of that." Chong Bong Su spoke stiffly. He gripped his knees with his thick-knuckled hands and stuttered and again wiped his face.

"Tell me exactly what the Ryosin Youth Association is doing now."

"As I told you, nothing. They have some money earned by joint farming, with which they eat noodles at their meetings. And the leaders fight for either 'Chongui-bu' or for 'Chamui-bu', nor do they care for 'Kukmin-bu' formed in the merger. They are as divided as ever and all they do is squabble. We wondered if it might not be better if we joined the socialist movement so we listened to the 'Koryo Communist Youth League's' propaganda."

"And what do they say?"

"Their propaganda is terrific, but I don't think there is anything to back it up. They say that we could have socialism right away, but when we asked them how to deal with the Japs, they had no answer. One evening a KCYL man gave us a lecture on

socialism, but he was attacked by a 'Chongui-bu' man and had to run for it."

Chong Bong Su mopped the glistening sweat off his forehead. The long towel he carried with him was wet through now.

"Sir, would you show us young people of Chiaoho which way to go? We have the spirit to do big things but we cannot do them alone."

Chong Bong Su looked earnestly at Comrade Kum Song. Comrade Kum Song saw the young people of Chiaoho in utter confusion. He also could understand their burning desire for revolution. He talked to Chong Bong Su all night. He told him about the Korean revolution, and how they should study in order to take the right road and how they should build up a revolutionary underground organisation. Chong Bong Su listened attentively, his black eyes wide.

Comrade Kum Song wrapped *What Is Socialism?*, *Outline of Capital* and *Outline of Materialism* in a newspaper for him. Then Chong Bong Su drooped his head and remained dumb.

"What are you thinking so, Comrade Chong?"

"Oh, no, I am only grateful...."

Saying this, Chong Bong Su wiped away his tears on his towel. That night and the whole day next day he talked to Chong Bong Su about the revolution in Korea. Chong Bong Su returned to Chiaoho, saying that now he felt as if he saw a torch in a moonless night.

More than a month had passed since Chong Bong Su's return. A very thick letter came from him. It said the AIYL branch had been formed within the Ryosin Youth Association and that the members were studying hard with the books on Marxism-Leninism he had brought. But the letter added that the books contained a lot of difficult words which they didn't understand. The letter enclosed several sheets on which these words were listed. A reply was sent immediately with answers attached to those sheets.

Not long ago there had been another letter, thanking him for the explanations, which had been a big help. It said that the members were now gaining confidence, with the result that quite a few people were demanding the nationalist Ryosin Youth Association should be dissolved. It also asked about how to decide who was eligible for AIYL membership because, the letter said, this involved a lot of difficult problems.

The first letter seemed to have been written by another man

and the second by Chong Bong Su. The second letter was written in a large clumsy hand, and it looked as if it had taken a whole day to write.

So he hurried off to Chiaoho to see the young people in this place which was boiling like water in a kettle.

They were demanding: Crush the Ryosin Youth Association! Such and such fellows be defined as hostile elements and such and such men as waverers; a clear and rigid line of demarcation needed; only the really active should be organised and receive directions from Kirin.

That night he arrived at Chiaoho the AIYL members gathered in Chong Bong Su's were discussing these questions, with the door covered with a black cloth so that the light would not show from outside. But the youth here, too, were simple-hearted and sensitive. A few words of explanation persuaded them that they were wrong.

He explained it like this: we must keep the Ryosin Youth Association as it is with AIYL members working actively within it, so as to educate the healthy youth and bit by bit to draw them into the AIYL. It is also necessary to use the Ryosin Youth Association as a legal organization to awaken the masses. We have risen up to fight to rid ourselves of the exploiting classes. But first we must beat the Japanese. Therefore, we must not be hide-bound but must pull together all anti-Japanese forces and rouse them to the struggle. We must not leave people out in the cold by stigmatising them as "hostile elements" or "waverers". For revolutionary victory, we will need every extra man.

This made them all more serious. Most were peasants, and they listened modestly yet carefully. Some of them were shame-faced all through the meeting, when their errors were pointed out.

That night, the young men did not disperse and stayed around Chong Bong Su's house all night. Next morning Chong Bong Su and his wife whispered for a long time in the kitchen about what to give the guest. Then there was a silence. There was no rattling of bowls and saucers, so it was not certain whether breakfast was being prepared or not. When the baby started whimpering, Chong Bong Su whispered to it to hush. And suddenly the whimpering stopped.

Chong Bong Su looked even shyer than at Kirin. He had noticed it at the meeting, and in the morning. He looked different and apologetic.

Chong Bong Su's family had worked as bond-slaves for three generations. His grandfather and father had been bond-slaves at Puryong, Hamgyong Province, and Chong Bong Su himself had been in bondage at Myongchon before he came over to Chiaocho where his uncle lived and it was only thanks to his uncle that he had been able to get married. At present he was sharecropping, and he was always heavily in debt. He was making a living more suitable to a sparrow and the landlord might overrun even his sparrow's nest at any moment.

"I am sorry, sir, that you have no side-dishes; only the dried-vegetable soup and...." Chong Bong Su faltered bringing in a tiny breakfast table. On the small round table there was a covered bowl of boiled millet, a bowl of dried-vegetable soup, a pot of bean-paste stew, seasoned egg-apples, a tiny bowl of soy as well as a bowl with two boiled eggs without shells.

"Let's have breakfast together, Comrade Bong Su."

"I'll have mine in the kitchen."

Chong Bong Su hurried down into the kitchen, his face very red, as if he had committed some blunder. Then the sliding door was opened and his wife, whose hair was neatly parted in the middle, bowed respectfully.

"You are a valued guest, but what can I do, I have nothing I can give you, sir."

She spoke in the dialect of Kyongsang Province. But Chong Bong Su was afraid that his wife's words might have sounded impolite, and he showed up again at his wife's side and explained that she was born in Uisong, Kyongsang Province. With a shy face, his wife stepped backward.

Chong Bong Su was adamant about eating his breakfast sitting on the boarded floor of the kitchen. But Comrade Kum Song pulled his hand and, with an effort, managed to make Chong eat at table with himself.

They were an unforgettable pair. Despite their abject poverty, they were so simple and had so much hearts. He thought he would never forget the flavour of these dried-vegetable soup and bean-paste stew.

The train ran along the foot of a high hill before it entered a moonlit wilderness. Comrade Kum Song remembered that when he was getting onto the train, Chong Bong Su's wife had jumped into the coach before him and hurried out again, leaving something behind her. He looked up to find a hemp-wrapping cloth

on the rack which, on opening revealed several heads of boiled sweet-corn. And they were still warm. She must have taken them out of the steaming pot. His heart was moved by this warmth and kindness. This warm sweet-corn was no ordinary corn. It contained the sorrow of a people without a country, the sorrow of poverty, and all that went with it, and their tearful endeavours to overcome these sorrows and to rise up and live! Surely no ordinary corn.

Coral columns in the blue sea...and of the shining coral columns of the revolution the glitter at Chiaoho looks nearest and dearest.

The train swung round the base of another mountain. Red sparks hit the window and scattered like the sparks from a flint.

3

While Comrade Kum Song was away in Chiaoho, there was a serious conflict among the teachers of Yuwen Middle School, a result of the serious antagonism between the progressive teachers around the principal and Wang Hsi-tung and the other reactionary teachers. It came out in the open when Glacier criticized the Changchun-Dairen and Kirin-Hoeryong railway projects. Exposing the Japanese imperialist ambition to invade Manchuria, he cursed Chang Tso-lin as a traitor who had aimed to sell the country off and had lost his own life. At the time public opinion was enraged over a railway explosion in which Chang Tso-lin was killed.

"Why do you charge Chang Tso-lin," Wang Hsi-tung shouted using his big fist on desk. "If he was aiming to betray the country, he would not have been killed in an explosion. We've long known that you have been infected with seditious ideas."

Then the chief of school affairs attacked the principal for conniving at Comrade Kum Song's revolutionary activities.

"This school is like a communist university. It is you, Mr. Principal, who told us it was an honour to keep this career revolutionary in our school. Do you remember what you said?"

"Say what you like. I am not answerable to you. If anything is wrong, it is that I have not been able to let my students try

harder to seek truth."

The principal held up his long face and seemed unafraid ready to shout down his attackers or to face a dagger if need be.

Glacier, too, was not frightened. He sat there smoking, very dignified, though his face looked a bit drawn. But he could not accept what the school affairs chief had said, and said seriously:

"You say the student is Communist. And I say that if Communists were like him, you might do well to become one. That student should become a teacher at this school and you his students. Educationally that might well be sounder."

And with this, Glacier got up and left the office. The reactionary teachers were furious and burst out shouting that this was an outrage and so on while the progressive teachers who supported Glacier thought he had been splendid and looked at the discomfited reactionary teachers with smiles of derision.

But this was not the only such clash in the school office.

Wang Hsi-tung left no stone unturned and he organized the right-wing students. One evening he gathered several dozen in a classroom and encouraged them to launch a boycott against the principal and Glacier. One of these students was as tall as Wang Hsi-tung and worshipped Wang like his grandfather. He was a good baseball player and so violent in his behaviour that he was nicknamed Satan. Satan was Wang Hsi-tung's first and most enthusiastic supporter, the more so that he bore a grudge against Comrade Kum Song. For some time earlier, Comrade Kum Song had insisted that the baseball ground which was monopolised by Satan and his crowd should be available to all the students, that others, too, had a right to play there.

Satan said that the students should get rid of any teachers who had defended Comrade Kum Song. Some other right-wing students were by no means enamoured of Satan or what he said. And yet, getting involved in the ideological confrontation, they saw a precipice ahead. So far they had not spoken up about the school becoming a hot-bed of communism, but now they felt that they could no longer remain silent. They listened carefully to Wang Hsi-tung and when he asked the ayes to raise their hands one hand after another went up.

It was around this time that Comrade Kum Song came back to Kirin. Having been told about the incident, he lost no time in learning about the situation. Before he came, the school branch of the YCL had held meetings and discussed this matter. But Chae

Gyong had also been away working in Changlin-tung, so the YCL branch had mapped out emergency measures, without hearing the views of the officials. They had planned to persuade and bring down Satan and other rightist ringleaders and were getting ready to attack Wang Hsi-tung with clubs in a back-alley.

The night Comrade Kum Song returned, Choe Jin Guk came to report, and told him of his determination to beat the hell out of Satan, too, if they could not handle him.

"We must not recklessly use violence."

"But they won't listen to us."

"If they won't listen, let us bring them down by the strength of the masses."

He had known that for some time this antagonism existed at the school, but now that it had come to a head and a showdown was inevitable, he could not control his anger.

Next morning when he came to school, he noticed that the atmosphere had changed. Students were standing about in groups in the school grounds instead of playing tennis or football. As he stepped into the school grounds students surrounded him, and asked him in whispers whether he had heard the news.

"I have."

"Let us hit them hard."

The students spoke in undertones, balling their fists. One of them said that Wang Hsi-tung had met Satan behind the warehouse this morning for a talk.

Comrade Kum Song went quickly to his classroom, and here, too, several students were talking in whispers. They rushed up to Comrade Kum Song, overjoyed that he had come back at this critical moment. He put down his bag and left the classroom in order to see the principal first. The students in the classroom were excited and followed him. They had regained their confidence and started behaving imperiously. Two students ran to the warehouse near the gym. One of them went into the warehouse and with tennis rackets and the net over his arm ran out into the school grounds. The other student brought out two footballs, kicked one of them high into the air, and put another on the ground and sent it rolling with the tip of his canvas shoe. Students came bouncing into the grounds from all directions. The school grounds began to fill and things became lively. In one corner they played tennis, in another football.

On his way to the principal's office, Comrade Kum Song

bumped into Glacier in the hallway in front of the library.

"Sir!"

"Ah, you are back!"

"Came back last night, sir."

"Where have you been?" asked Glacier, stroking his moustache.

"I went to the country where I had something to do, and there I heard that there had been an incident at the school."

"It was inevitable. But I am not afraid."

Glacier's deep-set eyes glittered.

"Justice always wins, sir. Be firm, sir, please."

"You are right—but why don't you come to my house? My wife has been waiting for you even more anxiously than I have. Someone brought us a box of tangerines, and she won't open it before you come."

"Thank you, sir. I'll come."

"Do come."

As soon as he heard footsteps coming from round the corner, Comrade Kum Song parted with Glacier.

He entered the head's office, where the accountancy clerk Wen-Horn was talking to the principal. According to the clerk, in the principal's absence, yesterday, an official from the provincial office and someone from the prosecutor's office had been there; they had inquired about the administration of the school, inspected the account books and checked the library books. Wen-Horn was fuming; red to the roots of his recently-cropped hair, he shouted at the principal as if he were one of them, asking why they had checked his account books as if he had embezzled some money.

"Ha ha ha. Look, the wild wind hits at anything in its way, you know." The principal, dumbfounded, was trying to soothe the clerk. The latter went out angrily.

"I came back last night, sir." Comrade Kum Song greeted the principal as soon as the clerk had gone.

"Come and sit down. Did anything happen?"

"I went to the country; I intended to be back on time, but I'm afraid I'm late. You must have been having some troubles, sir." Comrade Kum Song said, taking the chair in front of the principal.

"Troubles are nothing, however many. Man must be ready for many troubles if he is to stand up for justice. He must even

be prepared for the gallows. Those blackguards are checking our accounts. They are harassing us in various ways, you know."

"If they harass you, you must be ready to harass them back. Don't lose spirit, sir. I heard all about what happened at the school as soon as I got back. So I came to you right away because I would like you to take a firm attitude to the end. Please do not give up your post nor yet accept any of their demands."

"Thank you. I waited anxiously for your advice. There is a danger of our garden being trampled down by jackboots. They don't understand the sacrosanctity of education. Oh, how infuriating! How can we eliminate the evil of our times?"

"Unless we do, education never will be sacrosanct. Therefore, in my opinion, the school, too, must become a battle field where we will fight the evil of our times. That is the only way to guarantee that the education should be sacrosanct."

"Right...."

The principal felt strong and wielded his fan. Wisps of frosted hair fluttered on his temples.

That day, the principal and Glacier were in good spirits as they taught the students. The principal had not been assigned any specific lectures but the geography teacher being absent, he took over from him for all classes. And he remembered what Comrade Kum Song had told him. Why should I fear, he thought. Look at the shining eyes of those young students who are following that genius! They are burning with wisdom, they are like water gushing from a spring. These thoughts cheered the principal.

But later that day, Glacier's history lecture was interrupted for he was summoned to the Police Agency.

While Glacier was having a difficult time at the police station, Wang Hsi-tung held a meeting of reactionary teachers. They decided that they should stop asking for the principal's approval on any matter and that they should send a letter of denunciation against the principal and Glacier to the provincial office. They also decided to remove "history of the evolution of society" and other subjects from the timetable. The school affairs chief was well satisfied. Twisting his thin moustache with his skinny fingers, he was cynical enough to suggest they use the principal's room as a stockroom.

The confrontation became sharper. The reactionary teachers swaggered around as if the school were under their thumbs.

That night Comrade Kum Song held a meeting of the Yuwen Middle School YCL branch at Choe Jin Guk's. He had planned to take this opportunity to draw a line of demarcation between the progressive and malicious teachers at the school, so as to make the school more democratic, and bring teachers as well as students into the revolutionary movement. In order to do this, the YCL meeting seriously discussed the possibility of strike, preparing the demands to be submitted to the school authorities and the provincial office. They were as follows:

1. better treatment for the students. Allow them to enjoy democracy and to conduct their own affairs. Entrust the students with the management of the dining hall, library, sports equipment and so on.

2. to teach the subjects the students want, with an accent especially on the social sciences.

3. to take the pressure off the principal and Mr. Glacier.

4. to dismiss Wang Hsi-tung, the gym teacher, and Tsao Shang-pei, the chief of school affairs.

Then they wrote a letter of protest, concerning Wang Hsi-tung and Tsao Shang-pei's crimes (of which Choe Jin Guk had already made notes). As Wang Hsi-tung's first crime, he had brought the school under bureaucratic arbitrary control. Choe Jin Guk suggested that this fellow was not a teacher, and that he be denounced as the secret agent of the military regime. Wang Hsi-tung was also charged with prejudice of calling everything new or progressive communist. He enumerated Wang Hsi-tung's other crimes so fast that you could hardly jot down what he said. Comrade Kum Song examined this letter of protest carefully, and revised it. Wang Hsi-tung was charged with more than ten crimes. And by the time the crimes of the thin-moustached chief of school affairs were also written down in the letter it was nearly dawn.

It rained heavily next day, bleak rain that was a harbinger of autumn. Hsiaopai and Lungtan Mountains were veiled in mist; and chilly rain and mist whirled over the Sungari.

However, every classroom of Yuwen Middle School was filled to overflowing with warm breath. The students whispered, nudged each other.

"They say there will be a students' rally at four this after-

noon."

"Who is the sponsor?"

"The progressives."

"So, they are going to have a showdown. Safan brought a letter of protest round and asked us all to sign it."

"Did you?"

"Why should I sign a letter of protest against the principal?"

There was talk in every corner.

Safan went to a classroom for students' signatures and hit a snag.

"What's this? *A Letter of Protest*, eh?"

The students read the letter with Safan standing by. Before one had finished, another snatched it from him, reading it out in sarcastic tones. One of the students cunningly distorted passages to make it sound as if the undersigned were apologizing for their own crimes. There were quite a few signatures on the letter, though most seemed to be in Safan's own handwriting. They were going to make the letter public to the whole school before it was submitted to the provincial office and they were even planning to send it to the press.

But before many of the students had even read it, the letter vanished. Somebody had thrown it out of the window into the gutter where the rain was falling. The red ink ran and the thin rice-paper became soaking wet and fell apart. Safan had been talking to some students and did not see where the letter had gone. The students who had thrown it out were deep in conversation and pretended innocence. Some of them went back to their seats and drummed the tops of their desks with their fingers.

"What have you done with that letter?"

Nobody answered. The students who were standing at the glass door jostled each other.

"Who has got my protest letter?"

"Hey, who has got his letter?"

A long chinned student shouted out, following up Safan's shout, and looked around. But the other students were all absorbed in noisy conversations. Suddenly there was a thunderous laugh; somebody must have cracked a joke.

The laughing voices shook the classroom. They laughed still louder as they saw the wide-eyed Safan searching every corner for his letter.

"What did you do with my letter?"

"How should we know?" asked the students in chorus. But they hadn't done it as a joke; they were ready to resist to the end. Satan continued his search, rummaging through all the desks. Then he happened to glance out of the window and saw the gutter.

"Why...."

Satan's knees trembled. He was so shaken that he could not turn round to face the students. Under Satan's eye, rain water hit it and made hole just where the signatures had been.

"Which bastard did that to my protest letter?" shrieked Satan, whirling around, his jutting chin twitching with rage.

"How should we know?"

"Don't know? Nobody knows?"

"We don't know."

The grave faced students replied unanimously, looking hard at Satan. Satan's chin shook twitched still worse. His eyes turned blue as the dagger's edge and he lowered his thick, black brows.

"Right. Do you think that'll do you any good?"

Satan banged a desk and walked out of the classroom. He hurried along the corridor. Pools of water had formed in the ground between the classrooms and the dining hall. Satan waded across in his leather shoes. As soon as he entered the school affairs chief's room he burst out crying, his shoulders heaving violently.

4

Chae Gyong who had visited Changlin-tung came back to Kirin with Kang Chang Su from Liberation Village. The two young men walked briskly through a flatland road in the torrential rain. Kang Chang Su was in a mackintosh with a top and a pair of rubber boots, while Chae Gyong, also in rubber boots, held a paper umbrella. The two pairs of rubber boots crossed the misty valley, sloshing through the mud and breaking leaves of grass. The reddish mud splashed their trousers. The sound of water came from all directions as the rain beat on the hard ground. The red water streamed down the road and muddy water gurgled

through the stalks of grass.

"At any rate, all's well in Liberation Village now," Chae Gyong said. "It is a great success to have built it up like that in a year."

"But the question is the women's movement. It seems impossible to get rid of these deep-rooted feudal customs," returned Kang Chang Su. For the last a year, under the leadership of Comrade Kum Song, Kang Chang Su had devoted heart and soul to building up a revolutionary outlook in Liberation Village. As a result, he had been able to form a YCL branch and made sure that the organizations such as the AIYL, Women's Association and Juvenile Corps conducted their revolutionary activity under the guidance of the YCL branch.

Kang Chang Su put all his energy into guiding the Juvenile Corps. And nowadays, he was preparing to form a peasants' organisation. He wanted to discuss it with Comrade Kum Song, so here he was on his way to Kirin accompanied by Chae Gyong who was also going there. Changlin-tung was not far from Liberation Village, Chae Gyong had been there often from two months ago. He had started revolutionizing Changlin-tung the way Comrade Kum Song had done Changtong Village. Here, too, there was a YCL branch and an evening school.

But there were a few youths still under the influence of the Tuesday group, and Chae Gyong was racking his brains on how to deal with their disruptive strategy.

"The people in Changlin-tung envy Liberation Village very much. They say you people are better organised and more united.... Last night a young man came to see me, and asked if Mr. Kang could not be transferred to his village."

"And who will look after Liberation Village if I go to Changlin-tung?"

"They think that Liberation Village can stand on its own feet now."

They entered Kirin, talking. Though they wore mackintoshes, they were soaked to the skin. Kang Chang Su's mackintosh had a hole on the shoulder, where the rain leaked in.

As soon as they reached the main street, they went to a bookshop. Kang Chang Su bought dozens of books there and packed them in some sheets of wrapping paper. These were ready for his village. Whenever he came to Kirin he would buy books to take with him.

"Please keep this for me. I'll collect it tomorrow morning."

"You are as keen as ever."

"Ha ha ha. Please keep it for me, anyway."

Kang Chang Su laughed boisterously as the bookseller spoke and handed him the bundle of books. Chae Gyong, too, bought some books for the young people in Changlin-tung and came out of the shop with them under his arms.

That day after school, Gyong Ju was cooking supper, when she was told that both civil and military police were running towards Yuwen Middle School. She came rushing out and saw police in mackintoshes running frenziedly along the main road, which she could see from between the cloth shop and the noodle house. Some of them were bending forward and shouting as if going into battle. Civil policemen were also running past, some without mackintoshes even. Gyong Ju trembled. She had been awake all night when she heard that something had happened at Yuwen Middle School. She had visited Comrade Kum Song's lodgings twice last night, but he had not been in. And today the police were surging towards the school. What does this mean, Gyong Ju asked herself. Who could guarantee his safety? She was gripped by premonition. If he were arrested and the organisation destroyed, what would happen to the revolution? Gyong Ju felt the ground sink under her feet.

She ran into the house and slipped on the raincoat hanging on the wall of the shed. It was short, just long enough to cover her jacket; her brother wore it on rainy mornings to deliver milk. She bounced out of the house again, and dashed down the back-alley through the rain. She slipped several times and leaned against the wet walls. When she got to the main street, it was raining still more fiercely. The rain hit her hard, on her head and brow. She covered quite a distance to get to Comrade Kum Song's lodgings. She knew he would not be in, but still she had come running. She opened the door and felt cold in the deserted room. It seemed to be colder than when she had been here last night. The room was bare except for a desk. And yet, the books were neatly stacked, looked rather bright. There was an open book on the desk with a red pencil on it, exactly as it had been last night.

For a while Gyong Ju stood in the middle of the room, then ran to the room where the old landlady lived. Her family, too, had heard the news already, and they were sitting anxiously

watching the noisy rain.

"Didn't he come home last night?"

"No. We waited up for him all night. We were going to the school this morning, but we were told that the Police Agency had prohibited outsiders from entering the school, so we didn't go." The granddaughter-in-law replied.

"They can't lay hands on him. They must not." The landlady said. But her deeply-furrowed face was full of anxiety as she sat gazing through the glass window at the rain outside. The rain-water dripped on the floor from Gyong Ju's raincoat. A few moments later she went out again. Now she ran towards Pak Gwang Sik's despite the rain. She thought if he was in, he might know what had happened at Yuwen Middle School and even if not, she could discuss what needed to be done with him. But she found that Pak Gwang Sik had not yet returned from school. Gyong Ju did not know what to do. She thought maybe she should go and see Cho Chang Jin or Song Chun Bo outside Tesheng Gate. She was running along the side-street, when she saw Kang Chang Su and her brother coming from the opposite direction, their rubber boots splashing muddy water.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Brother!" Gyong Ju called out, her lips quivering.

"What's wrong? You are as drenched as a rat. Where are you running?"

Gyong Ju clenched her chattering teeth, swallowing her sobs.

"Tell me what happened."

Chae Gyong went to his sister and touched her shoulder. She raised her eyes, her face wet though it looked burning hot.

"Brother, go to Yuwen Middle School quick. I just saw whole packs of civil and military police going there. Comrade Kum Song is in danger."

"But what for?"

"They say something...some sort of incident has happened. He must be regarded as undesirable. I must tell you one thing, Brother. Why are you and your friends so indifferent to Comrade Kum Song's safety?"

"We are to blame."

"I went to his lodgings last night, and the old landlady said he keeps skipping meals. However busy he is, you must make sure that he eats."

Chae Gyong and Kang Chang Su were speechless, their con-

sciences smiting them.

"Let's go to the school," urged Kang Chang Su.

"Let's. Gyong Ju, prepare for a YCL meeting just in case of emergency. Because if anything happens, we must not lose time in taking actions...."

"I understand."

She again clenched her teeth and wiped tears and rain from her cheeks. Then she turned and ran into the pouring rain.

As Kang Chang Su and Chae Gyong came to the front gate of Yuwen Middle School, they found two policemen standing guard, with fixed bayonets. Chae Gyong quickly noted that civil and military police stood at short intervals all round the walls. Kang Chang Su silently preceded and approached the gate, rustling his mackintosh. Chae Gyong followed with composure, splashing the accumulated water with his boots.

"Hali...."

"You can't go in."

But Kang Chang Su was already through the gate.

"Don't you know us?" yelled Chae Gyong and he, too, passed the front gate. Their action was so audacious that the two policemen stared at each other, dumbfounded.

"Who are they?"

"Look like teachers."

"The overbearing...."

The two policemen grumbled as they clung to the slippery butts of their rifles.

Kang Chang Su and Chae Gyong entered the school grounds where a stunning scene was unfolding in the rush of slanting threads. The wide area was packed with students and covered with umbrellas of all hues—some like the wings of bats, some roundish paper umbrellas and small women's parasols. The rain hit noisily at these umbrellas and steam rose up from them. On the platform, from which the principal made a speech every morning, Comrade Kum Song was speaking. His loud voice rang throughout the school grounds, topping the sound of the rain.

"...At present the Japanese imperialists are invading Manchuria more openly and on a larger scale. They are trying to turn Manchuria into a separate special territory and grab all concessions there. That's why, last May, they issued what they called a "Declaration on Maintaining Peace in Manchuria", claiming that in order to keep peace in Manchuria, the Japanese armed

forces must go in. No three-year-old child even would believe that Japanese imperialists would make such declaration without any behind-the-scenes bargaining with the Chang Tso-lin regime. Even if the Chang Tso-lin regime is not selling Manchuria openly, who can honestly say that they are not so sympathetic towards the Japanese that they have not consented to this aggression!..."

There were bursts of applause and loud hurrahs. Some students held up their umbrellas, others twirled them but all shouted their agreement. Despite array of umbrellas they were all wet. On the platform two students held umbrellas over Comrade Kum Song, but he spoke so passionately that they could not keep up with his movements to shelter him from the rain. He came out from under the umbrellas as he spoke, raising his clenched fist. His clothes were dripping wet and the rainwater streamed down his cheeks. As his voice became fiercer, a whistle was blown outside the wall and then the scuffle of boots. The civil police, who had surrounded the wall raced down the slope and assembled near the front gate, yelling and ready to rush through it. At this very moment a dozen or so MPs came running towards them, shouting to them not to act rashly. The civil policemen stopped at the front gate in the beating rain.

"Don't act rashly! Return to your posts."

"He is insulting our government."

"Don't touch the students unless they run out of the gates. This is an order from the Army Headquarters."

Comrade Kum Song continued to speak about making the school more democratic.

"I have a question to ask you: Is there a bud of democracy in our school?"

"No."

"Is there a spark of freedom of inquiry?"

"No."

The students' answer shook the ground.

"Let me at least mention the bayonets that are forming a wall around these walls at this moment. Why do they form a ring of bayonets around a school? What crime have we committed? Did we try to harm any regime? We have only clear eyes and pure hearts that anxiously seek truth. We cannot forgive those who trample down our school. We must fight them, fight for our ideals, our hopes, the sacrosanct liberty of the school for

inquiry into truth."

He was getting more and more excited. Chae Gyong standing among the listening students looked up at his face. His eyes blurred and he had a tight throat as he recalled his sister's remorse for his neglect in protecting him. Chae Gyong felt as if he had committed a great crime.

Comrade Kum Song appealed to all the students to go on strike for a more democratic school, in opposition to the repression of progressive teachers. All the students hailed the appeal in unison. Umbrellas soared up and caps flew into the air.

He brushed back his wet hair with his hand and, with a wave of the hand, got down from the platform.

The hurrahs went on a long time.

As soon as he came down, Choe Jin Guk leapt up on the platform and read out the draft letter of protest and demands.

Meanwhile, in the school affairs chief's room Tsao Shang-pei and Wang Hsi-tung were very on edge, sitting down and getting up again. They had lost all their forces. When Comrade Kum Song came back and the students' spirits became sky-high, the group of right-wing students had crumbled like a wall of sand. The campaign to collect signatures for the letter of protest had been launched through Satan, but it too had fizzled out because of Satan's blunder. As a result there had been a lot of vacillation among the right-wing teachers. As soon as they had smelt that a students' rally would be held on the school grounds today, they had fled. Now Wang Hsi-tung and Tsao Shang-pei could pin their hopes on the civil and military police who surrounded the walls but they, too, would not move.

In an endeavour to get the police, Wang Hsi-tung went to the telephone and rang up the Director of the Police Agency. But he was not in and only the voice of a youngster, apparently the janitor, uttered a few incongruous words and then cut off. Wang Hsi-tung was enraged and picked up the receiver again, when Satan came in, opening the creaking door beside the telephone stand.

"God damn you for a stupid ass!" Wang Hsi-tung threw down the receiver and slapped Satan in the face, in anger. Standing at the glass window, the school affairs chief watched as Satan staggered and fell.

The students dispersed through the school gate. Chae Gyong and Kang Chang Su went out through the gate, guarding

Comrade Kum Song. Kang Chang Su covered him with his mackintosh and held up a tiny umbrella, though where he got it, nobody knew. In order to protect Comrade Kum Song from the rain he leaned the umbrella towards him.

That night many YCL members gathered at Chae Gyong's. But it was unnecessary to hold a meeting. They were seated in upper and lower rooms talking and laughing over the students' rally.

In the kitchen Gyong Ju pushed empty rice husks into the fire and turned the bellows on it. Clear tears glittered in her eyes.

The heavy rain stopped. Dark clouds flew past like smoke and a bright moon floated in the middle of the sky. The whole universe looked vacant and chilly after its tremendous toil and only the round moon remained. And yet, the anxious songs of life were heard all around. There were all kinds of insects in the grass, on which the raindrops glittered and they all chirped in different voices.

CHAPTER XV

TO THE SQUARE

1

Yuwen Middle School became quiet.

There was not a student to be seen in any classroom or in the grounds. In the morning and evening magpies cawed and scratched in the sand of the wrestling ground, then fluttered up and flew over the roofs. A school without students is like a dried-up pond with the stones and mud exposed to the air. However, the school was not completely deserted.

The head and Wen-Horn, the accountant, came in every day, as did Glacier and the other progressive teachers, for the students' strike was also their own means of attack. Once in a while Wang Hsi-tung and Tsao Shang-pei appeared, their sharp eyes looking everywhere. They visited the provincial office and the Police Agency every day. They had not given up their plan to get the head and Glacier dismissed and Comrade Kum Song arrested—they did not care a hoot what state the school was in. For their part, the progressive teachers lodged a joint protest with the provincial office and the Police Agency. They made it clear that the school had been closed down because of what these two organizations had instigated through Wang Hsi-tung and his ilk. Unless the problem was solved fairly, the letter warned, decisive action might be taken by the general public. Meanwhile the head had given interviews to quite a number of newspaper reporters.

He was elated and came in every day. The Wen-Horn was pleased with his attitude, and used to come to his office from time to time, to give encouragement.

"At any rate, I hope you will be firm, sir, so that we can stick to our position with confidence. It would be unthinkable for you to withdraw, leaving the Cat's Whisker or Wang to become head.

"It would be quite impossible."

Wen-Horn clenched his teeth.

He instructed the janitor not to clean Wang Hsi-tung's or chief's desks. He told him that if he had the strength to clean their desks or floors, he would rub and scrub the principal or Glacier's desks until they shone. He bought a tiny potted pine tree and placed it on Glacier's desk.

Thus an invisible battle was going on at Yuwen Middle School, and nobody could predict who would end up the victor. On the other hand, the incident at Yuwen Middle School had been a great shock to all the other schools in Kirin. Students were astir. They were furious that the Police Agency and the provincial office had meddled in, and the civil and military police had been sent to encircle the school. So all the other schools waited to come out in sympathy, the Law School in the forefront. The AIYL branch there had discussed the matter and passed a resolution to come out and they were quickly followed up by the Girls' Middle, the Girls' Normal, Wenkuang Middle and the Fifth Middle School, at all of which there had been similar resolutions. The whole town of Kirin was stirred up and ready to do battle.

All the schools were at the ready, waiting only for Comrade Kum Song to give the word. But Comrade Kum Song would not do so.

"You had better desist from strikes. Wait for a while."

"But shouldn't we demonstrate the united strength of the students and achieve democracy in all the schools...wouldn't that be good? Surely democracy is not an issue confined to Yuwen Middle School."

"Yet you should not," said Comrade Kum Song. "The fight at Yuwen Middle School is with the Chang Tso-lin regime. If all the schools came out in sympathy, it would mean concentrating our forces on that regime. We have more important things to do than fight Chang Tso-lin."

He continued:

"We must always aim our arrows at the Japanese imperialists, must concentrate our attacks on them. It is true that the Chang Tso-lin regime is pro-Japanese. However, the locals are becoming rather anti-Japanese as a result of the bombing of Chang Tso-lin. So why should we hit them so hard? Surely we should encourage this anti-Japanese feeling and get them to direct their spears against the Japs."

"That seems sound policy. None of us had thought of that." His profound insight and views drew still more admiration from the AIYL leaders in all the schools.

"Let us declare our first war against the Japanese imperialists. Let us ignite great flames to fight the Japs, instead of continuing with our strike."

He said in a resolute tone. But he did not tell them how to fight the Japs. He looked meditative.

Recently he received a letter from Chang Dok Sun in Tunhua, which told him that the Japanese imperialists were speeding up the building of the Kir-Hœ (Kirin-Hoeryong) railway line from Tunhua station, that they were plundering the peasants' farm land, and had in some places destroyed whole villages, leaving the peasants' lives in ruins.

In conclusion, the letter ended:

"The people are panic stricken and their grievance against the Jap imperialists has reached the extreme. In some cases the projected line runs straight across the roofs of houses and the peasants are attacking the land surveyors, driving pitch-forks through their heads. Some peasants set fire to their houses before leaving. How can we stand aside, indifferent to all this? I don't know how to cope with it. It is difficult to fight because our organisation is not strong enough. Please give us the right orientation for our work; give us detailed instructions, and quickly, for the situation here is critical. We cannot sit with folded hands.

"With fraternal greetings,

"Chang Dok Sun"

As soon as he received the letter, Comrade Kum Song replied:

"Dear Comrade Chang Dok Sun,

"I have received your letter, telling me what is happening in your area. Please sit tight until you receive detailed instructions. Unite your organisations with one idea and train them so that in an emergency they fight with determination.

"We must skilfully develop the anti-Japanese spirit you mentioned for our struggle. It is good that the masses are sizzling with anti-Japanese spirit. If we can only lead them right, we will defeat any enemy. We must always remember that we cannot win only

on a wave of mass indignation. We must organise and guide the masses skilfully. Unite them. Let me repeat: we must achieve solidarity. For solidarity will lead to victory.

"That is all for the present."

Having sent this answer he began mapping out a plan to fight the Japanese imperialists. Now he was thinking not of the students' strike but of a far bigger, tougher battle—to stop the Kir-Hoe railway line being built!

Every night he strolled about Peishan Park. He would be very thoughtful, walking through a thicket or standing erect on some hill. It took him several nights before he made a firm decision.

The students' strike must end right now, he thought. The development of the situation shows that the aims of the strike will be achieved easily. If so, we should not be marking time, we should be starting out on the greater fight, and with the beginning of that, the strike must end.

His heart leapt at the thought.

So far I have done some organising, some educational work and propaganda. But the struggle to stop their building the Kir-Hoe railway line is a great social and political struggle that could develop all this work to a higher stage. It is a struggle, in which we shall actually be fighting the Japanese imperialists. The organisations need plunging into fire to temper them, so that all the organisations will be hard as steel. We must not lose this chance to start the struggle now.

He walked across the grass heavy with excitement. The moon came out and shed its blue light on his shoulders and face, and then it vanished again behind the clouds.

2

There was a cellar under the terrace in front of the main Yowang Mausoleum on Peishan Hill, though nobody knew why it had been built. If you went down the ladder you would find yourself in a high-ceilinged room and see the half-length statue of a monstrous-looking Deva holding an iron club carved into one of the walls.

One evening they held a meeting there of YCL leaders from all schools.

Comrade Kum Song had obviously arranged it with the caretaker, for he was standing under the mulberry tree beside the front gate and greeting the students as they came. The students went down the ladder to the dark basement lit by a single wax candle that hissed and gave a dancing light.

Chae Gyong sat scribbling some notes at the desk where the candle was stood. It was littered with papers. Gyong Ju and Paek Sun Hui, who had only joined the YCL quite recently, cast uneasy looks up at the ceiling before they sat down; there were huge drops of water hanging on it.

"Look at that. What's that thing carved in the wall? It's got fearful eyes." Paek Sun Hui whispered, moving close to Gyong Ju. Gyong Ju, too, was looking at the wall. And indeed, the Deva looked much more frightening than the drips of water hanging on the ceiling. It was an exquisite sculpture, and looked as if it was going to hit somebody.

"They were good sculptors even then."

"So you're not frightened, you even like that horrible thing..." whispered Paek Sun Hui.

Gi Jun and Cha Duk Bo came down into the cellar and behind them Chun Taek and Hyon Tae Bong from the wharf, where AIYL and YCL branches had been set up. Hyon Tae Bong, a stevedore, was a little like Cha Duk Bo to look at, though he was rather more independent and outgoing. That was why the supervisors at the wharf had to handle him with care. At present Chun Taek and Hyon Tae Bong were working together in the organisation.

Soon the cellar was crowded. Comrade Kum Song came in just behind Kwon Sim. He was determined to pull Kwon Sim into the fight.

"Gosh, what's this?"

The drops of water had been hanging on the ceiling, but the moment Kwon Sim came in, one fell straight onto his balding brow. Kwon Sim was so surprised that everybody burst out laughing.

"Isn't this dangerous?"

Kwon Sim looked up at the ceiling, taking out a handkerchief to wipe his forehead.

"This cellar was built at the same time as the Yowang Mausoleum. It will hardly fall in on us now. Go on, sit down."

"But who knows, now that Kwon Sim the unlucky is here,"

said Kwon Sim, raising another peal of laughter.

The meeting began late at night. Comrade Kum Song spoke about organising resistance against the Kir-Hoe railway line. He explained the necessity for this struggle, and then read Chang Dok Sun's letter.

"This is how matters stand. The railway project itself is aimed at robbery and aggression, and while building it they are creating absolute havoc. How can we stand by as onlookers to this? Through this struggle against the railway construction, we must let the Japs know how hostile we are to them. And we must use it to temper our own ranks."

All present listened quietly, their faces flushed. Pak Gwang Sik looked up at his face, clenching his fists. Choe Jin Guk, a bit smaller build, sat beside him and stared around at the comrades with his slightly protruding yellowish eyes.

Gyong Ju was as confident as ever. Seated by the Law School's YCL chief, she remained calm, her long lashed eyes lowered. Paek Sun Hui who was already excited, kept taking and letting go of Gyong Ju's hand. Sometimes Paek Sun Hui bent and squeezed her fingers. But Gyong Ju remained unmoved, leaving her hand in hers.

"I have a request. Would you reread Comrade Chang Dok Sun's letter?" asked Pak Gwang Sik, as soon as Comrade Kum Song had finished. He read it again.

"Those dirty blackguards! Going to lay their rails right across the roof of a house?" muttered Pak Gwang Sik, his eyes flaming.

"I have a proposal to make."

Cha Duk Bo got to his feet, spreading his hands.

"Well, give us workers a big task in the coming battle to stop them building the Kir-Hoe railway line."

"A good proposal, Comrade Cha. The workers must always be in the lead." Comrade Kum Song replied, smiling at Cha Duk Bo.

"A fight to stop the railway concerns the railwaymen."

Cha Duk Bo's face looked as if carved in bronze, the more so that his forehead shone from wearing his railwaymen's cap.

"Sit down. What nonsense are you talking?"

Gi Jun who had been seated as firmly as a rock, pulled down Cha Duk Bo's trousers. But Cha Duk Bo would not sit down, and continued:

"This fight is about a railway. Surely we railway workers should be right at the head."

"Good. Very good. Tasks will be assigned so that the railway workers can do their bit. But you must not try to do your bit by bragging about being working class, as I know, you are inclined to, Comrade Cha, ha ha ha."

Comrade Kum Song laughed boisterously, and started them all laughing. Chun Taek and Hyon Tae Bong also grinned.

The YCL meeting agreed on slogans and assigned preparatory tasks to various members. There were mountains of work to do—holding YCL branch meetings as well as AIYL meetings; activating and uniting the students; preparing speeches; making streamers, organizing teams of students, drafting leaflets and appeals, etc. Everybody seemed to be preparing for war and they accepted their tasks with pride.

Coming out after the meeting, Kwon Sim said to Comrade Kum Song: "This is tremendous. I feel as if I had opened my eyes for the first time today. But why didn't you give me a task?"

"You are not a YCL member. And you are weak.... Give us some active help from now on."

Comrade Kum Song watched him closely.

Back home, Kwon Sim stood in the centre of the room, unable to repress his excitement mixed with a sense of shame. After a while he sat down on the chair. His hand over the back of the chair swung limply.

I think I will have to reappraise myself, he thought. What am I? What do I live for and how? Am I as necessary to the Korean revolution as Choe Gi Jun or Cha Duk Bo, Chae Gyong or Pak Gwang Sik? Am I as necessary as any of the youths present at the basement of the Yowang Mausoleum tonight? For whom do I write articles? Even if my article is published in Seoul, what use is it? That *Outline of Labour Movement*...and this...and what is this for? This article reviewing the peasant movement.... Has this anything to do with reality? I have gone my way and the revolution its own way.... What changes have there been in this area around Kirin in less than two years? Have I watched this tremendous front? What have I done, except to sit and gaze at my books?

After a long while, Kwon Sim struck the top of the desk with his fist and rose up.

I will rise up, too, he cried to himself. Rise up and join in this new front! I will remember Comrade Kum Song's advice that one must write while fighting. If I forget that, I am finished as a man.

Holding the corner of his desk, Kwon Sim stood and trembled. Out in the street after the YCL meeting, Gi Jun remonstrated with Cha Duk Bo. Gi Jun said that Cha Duk Bo should not have taken the trouble to make such a proposal.

"If I shouldn't, I won't from now on. I did it because it seemed that the workers wouldn't be doing their bit."

"Comrade Kum Song always treats our affairs as very important. You must stop bragging about being a worker. As for the matters decided on tonight, let us discuss the actual measures with Comrade Sin Dong Ho tomorrow."

Cha Duk Bo parted with Gi Jun. He squatted in the grass beside the road, thoughtful for a while. Then he jumped to his feet and went to Sin Dong Ho's. Now that the fight was starting, he felt so excited that he could not wait for tomorrow. He thought before discussing the practical aspects, he would like to discuss things with Sin Dong Ho.

Everybody at Sin Dong Ho's was asleep except his mother, who sat on the floor of the hall smoking. When she saw a man coming into the dark yard, she wanted to know who it was.

"It is me, the stoker from the engine depot."

"The stoker? What brings you here at this hour?"

Sin Dong Ho's mother was delighted, pulling Cha Duk Bo in.

It was Sin Dong Ho's mother who had nicknamed Cha Duk Bo the stoker. When Cha Duk Bo said he fed the locomotive engine with coal, she said, "Then you are a stoker." (Cha Duk Bo had become an assistant engine driver last spring.) So, whenever he came to Sin Dong Ho's, he'd tell his mother it was the stoker from the engine depot. It had become his nickname.

"Is Comrade Sin asleep?"

"Yes, he is; he is sleeping like a log. But, young man, is all the work at the engine depot so backbreaking? Haven't you got some easier job there?"

"We have some. But when he was given an easier job, he refused it, saying that he had got to toughen up, and went to the foundry and took up hammering, though what we call the easier jobs are almost as hard as...."

"Look here, he's working so hard that he even hammers in his sleep. What does this 'wut, wut, wut' mean? Do you say that as you hammer?"

As the mother said "wut, wut", shaking her shoulder, Cha Duk Bo gave a burst of laughter.

"When he says that, his whole body jerks. Sometimes he wields his clenched fist. So I can't let children sleep beside him because he'd break their legs or heads if I did. I, too, woke up from a blow on the chin, God help me! So I scolded him for hitting his mother even though in his sleep. And do you know what he said? 'Mother, the iron is cooling, and I must strike it while it's hot.' I think he sees the whole world as the foundry at the engine depot. This is terrible—to make my son a foundry man! One misfortune follows on the heels of another, as a saying goes...."

The voluble mother went on to complain about the hardness of the times.

Sin Dong Ho had suffered many hardships. Last autumn, that night when *Throne of the Pine Kingdom* was staged he had expressed his desire to work at the engine depot, but he could not. He stayed at school and read the Marxist books Comrade Kum Song gave him. He became sympathetic towards Marxist-Leninist theory and able to see things from a new angle. Meanwhile his family had become poorer and poorer. And his father, who had lived in anger, always cursing the Japs, died of heart failure. His father's death was a great shock to Sin Dong Ho. Now he was the only one who could support the family. While his father was alive, he had depended on him, but now he could not. What little his father had saved had all gone on the funeral. His sister and sister-in-law had been in tears. Sin Dong Ho felt utter hopelessness. He lay in bed and worried, instead of going to school. One day Comrade Kum Song visited him. He brought with him the *State and Revolution* and asked him to read it.

"By the way, Comrade Sin, how about working at the engine depot? You said you wanted to some time ago."

"Engine depot?"

"Won't you try manual work?"

"I must work somewhere now. This accursed world...."

"I don't mean you have to take what's going, but I am advising you to do so, because it is urgent. You have not recovered yet?"

Sin Dong Ho did not answer.

"Go and work at the engine depot. That way you will experience manual work and study at the same time...."

Sin Dong Ho's heart was full with gratitude.

"You must learn from the workers as you educate them; that

is the main thing you must do at the engine depot. Their ideological level is high, so is their revolutionary consciousness. But they lack knowledge, which makes them slow in their study of Marxism-Leninism, and they cannot develop as they should. So, I'm advising you to work at the engine depot, arming yourself with Marxism-Leninism and teaching them. Please do your share among the working class. I am sure you can do this."

"I will work there. I think I must go there and I will rather put myself to rights before I try to teach others. What am I? I am utterly defeated, a slave of life, who cannot even take part in it." Sin Dong Ho cried. He readily accepted the job which he had talked about but had hesitated to undertake. He had drawn strength from Comrade Kum Song's encouragement and trust.

So, last May Sin Dong Ho got a job in the repair shop of the engine depot through Gi Jun's good offices. For some time he helped the turners and for a couple of months he worked as a stoker. And recently he had moved to the foundry and started hammering. Gradually he began to understand the meaning of life. He began to realize that swallowing the tears and suffering, being trampled in the mire was not all of life and that his true destiny was to fight the enemy who force people into such a plight, to bring happiness to the downtrodden. Thus he was resolved to overcome any suffering that would befall him. Hammering at the hot iron, he thought that in this work he could really see life and hammer out his ideas.

After her many complaints about the hardness of the times, Sin Dong Ho's mother went into the room, struck a light and woke her son.

"Wake up, son; the stoker is here."

"What's the matter with you?"

"The stoker has come. Get up."

That finally got Sin Dong Ho up from his bed, and rubbing his eyes, he came out into the hall where Cha Duk Bo was.

"Why did you come here so late?"

"To have a talk. Let us go out."

Cha Duk Bo came out of the main gate with Sin Dong Ho. They squatted in the dark yard and talked.

"We workers have been assigned an important task."

"What task?"

"All the youth and students in Kirin are going to oppose the Jap projects for the Kir-Hoe railway line, with the AIYL in the

van.... And we workers must also do our share, mustn't we? Anyway, this fight concerns the railways. So, we railway workers must put our shoulders to the wheel." Cha Duk Bo cried out in excitement.

"Any instructions from above?"

"I am on my way back from the meeting. No specific assignment yet, except that we should form teams of a dozen or so persons."

"Then we must form the teams. Didn't Comrade Gi Jun say anything?"

"I came back with him, but we didn't discuss any detail."

"But you must consult with the chief of the organisation."

"The hell with the chief. Once all the AIYL members make a demand in one voice, the chief of the organisation will have to agree, you see?"

Sin Dong Ho laughed in amazement.

"Can't we carry out a strike by ourselves?"

"No, we mustn't. We must act on instructions from above. And we must discuss it with the chief of the organisation. If we revolutionaries ignored the organisation and instructions and just acted as we pleased, what would happen?"

"Oh, you say a smart thing, Comrade Sin."

"I'm not saying a smart thing. It is only too true. Don't you know what Comrade Kum Song said? An organisation must have discipline, and every member must hold it dearer than his own life."

"Well, it is true that if you don't act as instructed by the leadership and don't pay heed to the chief of the organisation, things are likely to go wrong."

"Yes. So we must obey our leadership."

"I wish Comrade Kum Song would give us workers some exciting task...."

Right now, Cha Duk Bo felt as if he could do anything—turn the whole engine depot into a mess or twist up the iron bridge and throw it into the Sungari.

After Cha Duk Bo had left, Sin Dong Ho could not sleep all night. He had many thoughts. Comrade Kum Song organises things remarkably well. He is going to set off the struggle against the building of the Kir-Hoe railway line; what is he going to do? If things develop like this, who knows Korea, too, will be visited by a great storm like the October Revolution in Russia? O how I wish the revolution would win and sweep those pitch-dark clouds

out of the sky....

With these thoughts, Sin Dong Ho got up. His sister-in-law was making breakfast, coughing occasionally. Her lungs seemed to be getting worse. In spite of her health, she went to the wharf on the Sungari to buy fish and go to the country to sell it, carrying it on the head. His sister's health was not good either. Her cheekbones stuck out on her yellow face and she would lie in bed with a headache. But when her sister-in-law left with the load of fish on the head, she followed her. The two women had to walk hundreds of *ri* to earn a few handfuls of grain. That was how they had managed to support the family. Sin Dong Ho had not been able to earn any substantial amount of provisions, though he might from now on.

His sister-in-law coughed for a long time, squatting on the kitchen floor. With an aching heart, Sin Dong Ho opened the door and went out into the hall, where his twin nieces and Bong Suk sat huddled together. With the family in such a plight, the children, too, were dispirited. They sat there unnoticed, watching the grownups' faces. They did not have enough to eat and their chins had sharpened and their eyes grown bigger. To make matters worse, one of the twins had started to cough like her mother, and she was breathing hard.

"Look at me, In Dong."

In Dong looked up at her uncle.

"Did you cough last night?"

In Dong nodded her head.

"Did you take all the medicine I brought?"

"No."

"Why don't you take it? You've got to take so you stop coughing."

In Dong got up quickly and went to the kitchen to take her medicine.

She was such a clever girl, and Sin Dong Ho could not stop the tears from welling up in his eyes. Son Dong and Bong Suk crouched down stealing glances at their uncle. Son Dong held something like a face-cream container in one hand, and Bong Suk's hand in the other. The expression on her face was not that of a child. She looked cold and miserable. And her vigilant eyes were sharp as a razor. Sin Dong Ho got goose pimples, feeling a deep antagonism. He avoided those eyes and went out into the yard. He had an irresistible urge to do something, anything to end

this pitifully bruised way of life.

3

The students' strike at Yuwen Middle School ended two days after the YCL meeting, when the provincial office dismissed Wang Hsi-tung and Tsao Shang-pei and gave in to the students' demands. The students went back to school. The morning when the school reopened, the hill that led to the school and the school grounds became a cauldron of excitement. Students hugged each other, and shouted for joy.

"Hurrah for victory."

"Forward!"

Everybody was shouting and shaking hands, some saying solidarity was life.

The school grounds was like a springboard. They made a terrific noise, leaping, rolling and hailing. All the sports equipment was brought out. In one corner they played tennis, in another basketball and in still another corner, they exercised with iron bars. There had been two footballs, but now there was a third, made of red leather. Maybe the Wen-Horn had been keeping it, and when the school had reopened, had thrown it into the grounds, to make this happy day still happier. So, the three balls kept flying into the air. There were many good footballers. Sometimes balls darted up so high into the sky that, as students said, the gods in heaven might sneeze. They ran after one ball or another and scattered and burst out laughing.

There was a fierce battle on the tennis court between Comrade Kum Song and Glacier. Glacier felt rejuvenated. He was short-armed and left-handed. He hit the ball in a fierce straight drive. He could move his short arms very quickly. But Comrade Kum Song sent it back quite calmly, however powerful the drive, finding all the spots where his opponent was vulnerable. Both of them perspired freely. The tennis court was surrounded by a crowd of people, some cheering Comrade Kum Song and others Glacier.

Satan appeared at the school. He dug the ground with a piece of wood by a lane leading to the latrine. Huge tears trickled down

from his eyes.

There was a rumour among the students that Wang Hsi-tung had fled to Tientsin. And they talked noisily about Tsao Shang-pei who was said to have taken to his bed, with a towel around his head.

That morning the principal spoke to the students for more than an hour. Wiping tears with his handkerchief, he referred movingly to what Comrade Kum Song had told him. He said among other things:

"The school too must be a battle ground to fight the evil of our times. This is the way to defend the sacrosanctity of education. This is correct, indeed. Were it not for such encouraging words, I would have been defeated by those school robbers. We cannot say that we have won complete victory in defending education this time. The muddy stream of our time still flows round education. We have only just begun our struggle. All the students and teachers must arm themselves more firmly to fight for education and truth."

The principal's speech excited both the students and the teachers who stood on either side of him. The students cheered the principal when he finished speaking, which was quite against regulations. Really this was also an ovation for Comrade Kum Song. With lively steps, the principal got down from the platform and went to the staff room, the other teachers following, after they too had vigorously applauded with the students.

The Yuwen Middle School students' triumph lent great impetus to all the other students in Kirin. Everywhere they went they talked about the victory, saying that truly unity was strength. A group of students from one school sent a congratulatory letter to the students of Yuwen Middle School, encouraging them to fight more firmly.

This spirit helped to step up preparations for the fight to stop the Kir-Hoe railway line. Every YCL branch was busy activating the AIYL, and the AIYL branches the students, knitting them together ready for action. The flames enveloped every corner and grew into a tremendous force.

Every night Pak Gwang Sik of Wenkuang Middle School trained speakers at his house—all the schools were preparing in this way.

The YCL branch of the Girls' Middle School was helping guide the AIYL branch of the Girls' Normal, and these two schools

made their preparations very quickly. Each of them made scores of streamers. Gyong Ju was a skilled organiser. She might be rather emotional, but as a leader, she was strict and demanding. Once she gave any student a task, it was carried out at all costs. That was why the AIYL branches of the Girls' Middle and Girls' Normal developed more rapidly than any other.

At the bottom of the back wall of the Girls' Normal there was a missing brick and Girls' Middle School students put Gyong Ju's written instructions into this hole and covered them with a stone, picking up any messages left there from the Girls' Normal. There were so many messages that sometimes, hands would be thrust in simultaneously from both sides of the wall.

"Who is it?"

"It's me. In Ae. Ho ho ho."

The two girls exchanged their notes and even squeezed each other's hands in the hole.

"Make sure that one gets to mother-in-law's own hands."

"Don't worry, I will."

The Girls' Normal students all called Gyong Ju mother-in-law. Not only because she was their leader but because she was so demanding. During the current preparation this postbox functioned very efficiently.

There was subdued excitement at Kwon Sim's house, too. At last Comrade Kum Song had drawn him into the struggle. Kwon Sim was writing an appeal and drafting various leaflets; and copied them onto stencils. He was doing this work with an entirely different attitude from when he used to write his articles. With the articles, he would feel as if he was aiming at clouds, but now, preparing these manuscripts, he felt something a new excitement and he breathed faster in spite of himself. From time to time he sent completed stencils to the main building. At present in the end room of the main building four students were busy duplicating, sweating with the effort. They had two duplicators which had belonged to the nationalists.

They had got a whole pile of leaflets ready and were making up bundles containing several hundreds each. Two girl students came in one at a time to carry the bags of rice-bran with the leaflets in them off on their heads, to avoid the watchful eye of the enemy. Those who did the duplicating did not know where they were being taken.

Once in a while Kwon Sim came in to help them, cut the paper

and worked the inky rollers.

"How wonderful all this is, students! Struggle is a great creation."

Kwon Sim chattered on, pressing the roller. His forehead glistened with the sweat, but he was deep in conversation.

"A great creation, indeed. It is art. If not art, struggle is the extremity of pain. Who would take the trouble to do that? We carry a heavy tower in our hearts that is called faith and on this tower a communist banner flutters.... That's why we are writing and copying the leaflets like this...it is a work of love, of passion. Passion, we must have passion. We must have love, you know, for without love, there is no creation, no art, no struggle."

As Kwon Sim spoke excitedly, huge drops of sweat rolled down his forehead and fell onto the duplicator. At such times Kwon Sim was another man, the rims of his sunken eyes were flushed behind the strong lenses in his spectacles.

Meanwhile the workers were also excited and on the move. At the wharf on the Sungari, Chun Taek and Hyon Tae Bong held YCL meetings twice on board some vessel. AIYL members had got through to the boatmen and stevedores and started agitating, telling them that there was a great fight coming up and that they would have to do their bit. They spread word in whispers among the workers at the carpenting, electric light bulb and the repair and maintenance factories. Chun Taek had kept a steamer at anchor for two days on the pretext of doing some repair; he bustled up and down with the chief engineer, a spanner in his oil-smeared hand. Each time the merchant or shipowner complained, he would knit his eyebrows and retort angrily that he was having a hell of a time because machinery was so worn out. Cheating them like this he speeded up the preparations.

Though not a member of either the YCL or the AIYL, Choe Song Gun, too, was in high spirits; pairing up with a young worker, he walked vigorously down the foot board, carrying one end of a carrying pole.

"I believe you have heard about it?"

"Why not?"

"You must do your share as a young man...."

He talked like this every time he met young people. He also talked to the old stevedores and boatmen, saying: "This world is going to have a radical cure just like my leg. We old folk must

not spare our old bones to carry them to the grave. Let us try to rise up too."

The workers at the engine depot were more active than those on the wharf. The sound of hammering, of puffing smoke, hissing steam, sirens—all this sounded like seething and surging forward towards some great climax. The workers nudged each other, asking if any instructions had come yet.

Everybody felt restless. The stokers too walked with a bonny gait. They never ceased to shout or laugh aloud in the heavy clouds of coal dust. There was a big change in atmosphere at the repair shop. The workers here were in such high spirits that they looked as if they would rip open the blackened ceiling that had oppressed their spirits. They came and went with vigour. Li Song Nam who used to stagger up the ladder with a load of coal on the shoulder, had grown up into giant now. Within a year he had become a skilled worker at the lathe. He always sang *Red Flag* in the noise. At times he beat time with his steps and shoulder. The smith threw off his sweat-soaked frayed shirt and worked at the anvil. The beads of sweat rolled down his chest, but he did not care; he yelled at the hammerer to hit as hard as if he were hammering the Japs. The workers were dripping wet with sweat and felt their backs breaking, but they did not care. They saw a new world appear under their red banner.

One evening Comrade Kum Song called Gi Jun to meet him unobserved on the bank of the Sungari. Receiving the message Gi Jun slipped quickly out of the main gate. He walked a long way towards the new quarter of the town and then down the back-alley behind Wenkuang Middle School. When he arrived at the river bank Comrade Kum Song was strolling along the grassy shore.

"You must be very busy. Let us sit down here."

Comrade Kum Song shook hands with Gi Jun and sat down on the grass, pulling Gi Jun down beside him.

"Comrade Gi Jun, pick out your active members and leave for Tunhua tomorrow night on the nine o'clock train. You must go to Tunhua and meet Chang Dok Sun, and arouse the masses to stop the railway being built."

"To Tunhua?" Gi Jun asked, quite taken aback, staring up at Comrade Kum Song's face. He had expected that some sort of demonstration would be organised, since they were fighting to stop building the Kir-Hoe railway line.

"Why are you surprised? Because it's so far?"

"No."

"Comrade Chang Dok Sun has done quite a lot of work at Tunhua. He will be delighted to have your comrades there to help. He is waiting for you most anxiously, so you must go quickly."

Gi Jun listened gravely taking off his railway cap.

"Should I take all the organised teams?"

"No, only the most active. But you must pick one or two out of each shop. If they leave their shops in whole groups, the enemy might smell a rat."

"I understand."

"Gather responsible people together tonight and make sound arrangements. You are being sent there because it is by no means easy. So you have to be well prepared."

For a while Comrade Kum Song talked about tactics and the situation in Tunhua. Then he took out a letter addressed to Chang Dok Sun, and asked him to take it to him personally and to be careful with it.

That night Cha Duk Bo, Sin Dong Ho and others assembled at Gi Jun's and they were discussing things in whispers late into the night. Cha Duk Bo was the most excited of all. He was incredibly happy, and kept saying that Comrade Kum Song had understood the working class had guts. But the question was how the workers would go to Tunhua. They could not get into the ordinary carriages because they would all be carrying knapsacks full of leaflets. Nor could they go on foot. Cha Duk Bo suggested that they take one of the trucks used at the line maintenance depot.

"How can we go to Tunhua by truck? Don't talk such nonsense." Gi Jun rebuked Cha Duk Bo. Cha Duk Bo thought Gi Jun was not bold enough but, in fact, though Gi Jun might be cautious, he undoubtedly had courage. He sat and smoked, and thought out a really good plan.

The next evening. The workers bound to Tunhua flocked to the railway station with everything ready. They all felt as if they were going into battle. They felt strong and walked lightly. Each carried a knapsack on his back. They gathered and bustled near the goods warehouse. One of the station staff challenged them. But recognising Gi Jun, he withdrew without a word. On the opposite side of the platform, there was a lot of congestion, where transport section workers were loading the wagons with what were apparently bags of grain. Passengers kept surging towards the

coaches, which were brightly lit and already crowded.

"Where are we going to get in? Surely we daren't get in the passenger carriages?" whispered Sin Dong Ho, because Gi Jun seemed to be about to propose just that.

"We'll have to take the tender," said Gi Jun, with a sigh.

As soon as the workers were all assembled, Gi Jun asked them to follow him. He pulled up his knapsack and walked ahead, in a swaggering gait, the others following. They hurried past the carriages.

Presently they were standing beside the engine, which was making a lot of noise, hissing steam and belching smoke. The engine driver and his assistant, both in dark glasses, were standing and chatting, pointing to the tender. Gi Jun jumped up on the engine room and touched the driver on the shoulder. The driver whirled round to stare at the intruder menacingly.

"I've brought the men I told you about."

"But why do you want to get in the tender?"

"Why, you agreed before. But now that they are here, you hesitate? They are all from the repair shop. Aren't you going to need them some day?"

"If they're from the repair shop, they can go in one of the passenger carriages; why on earth do they want to get in the coal car and breathe in smoke?"

"Look, I am asking for a favour. Come on, give us a ride. And we'll fix you up well any time your loco needs repairs."

Saying this, the audacious Gi Jun shouted at his colleagues to hurry up and jump on to the tender. Cha Duk Bo was the first up and the others followed.

"What's all this about? Don't try to deceive me, I'm a worker, too," said the engine driver meaningfully.

"If you are a worker, you should help your colleagues, shouldn't you?"

"How can I without knowing what you are going to do? I've known for a long time that my Sok Jin is socialist, but I have never told it to anybody. I'm a man who can keep a still tongue even with a dagger at my throat."

"My Sok Jin" was his assistant. Sok Jin who stood behind the engine driver blushed as he realised what sort of man his boss was.

"Please don't be angry!" Gi Jun shook hands warmly with the driver. He was delighted to realize that he had found another

worker who would be his comrade.

The tender was in a turmoil. They vied with each other to shovel coal into the glowing fire on the engine, taking a scoop from the fireman. When the whistle sounded, they raised shouts of joy.

"We're off!"

"Forward with your hammers in hand!"

"Forward with your iron hammers on your shoulders!"

"Forward the red banner!"

They yelled their slogans and laughed boisterously. The workers squatted or lay down on the straw bags brought in and spread over the coal by the two assistants.

Before long the train started hissing and was on the move. Again the workers cheered. Gi Jun and Cha Duk Bo who had been in the engine room jumped over to the tender. Several workers sang the *Red Flag* in chorus. Cha Duk Bo and a worker joined in the chorus, standing shoulder to shoulder in the middle.

Putting his head on Li Song Nam's knee, Sin Dong Ho looked up at the sky with tearful eyes. He thought this was the happiest moment in all his life. He suddenly saw his sister's thin face and his sister-in-law's pale one; he also saw the children's looks that had pierced to the marrow. And the face of his mother, who seemed to be living without a worry in this world. Their faces were sucked in the sounds of the wheels, the funnels and the songs and loomed large before his eyes.

From under the wheels, came the voices of the twin sisters calling to each other, crying, running. He could hear them wail and shriek and the voice of his sister-in-law pleading tearfully. He heard his sister's cries and his father's yelling. The noise turned into everything that had any associations for Sin Dong Ho. Why does the pathetic life haunt me so, even while the revolution is rushing ahead with such vigour to smash the old life with a sledgehammer and to bring in the new.

Warm tears trickled down from Sin Dong Ho's eyes.

Now they were singing the *Internationale*. Gi Jun pulled Sin Dong Ho to his feet. Then he put his arm round Sin's neck and joined the chorus. Sin Dong Ho followed him. The train continued to race forward, sometimes jerking angrily and sometimes rocking soothingly. Sparks flew up from the funnel and fell in bright arcs to the tender, from which the song was ringing.

The afternoon after the engine depot workers had left for Tunhua, things started in Kirin. Students from all the schools raced off to the public stadium, carrying their banners. A rally would be held as a prelude to the struggle. The students from Wenkuang Middle School were the first to reach the town. They came from Chaoyang Street on the outskirts through Hsinkai Gate. Banners waved over the marchers. The banners were inscribed in black stone ink with the words: "Down with the Japanese Imperialist Aggressors!" "Stop Building the Kir-Hoe Line!"

The columns pushed their way onto the road. Carriages, rickshaws and bicycles had to get out of the demonstrators' way.

Slogans were shouted. Walking in the middle of the column, Pak Gwang Sik would shout each slogan first, raising his large clenched fist. Sometimes, he stepped on tiptoe, craning his neck. Then, in a forest of clenched fists they would all shout it. Pedestrians stopped on the pavement to watch, shop-keepers came out of their shops and people came running out of the alley-ways. Soon the street was crowded with onlookers, both grownups and children. As the procession of students grew larger and larger all the carriages and rickshaws had to stop. The sound of marching and shouted slogans shook the whole street.

Wenkuang Middle School was followed by the Fifth and First Middle Schools, who each had scores of slogan-leaders. The leading shouts kept sounding and the whole procession could no longer follow all the slogans. One of the leaders stepped out of the procession and shouted. Noticing his conspicuous cheekbones and full lips the onlookers admired his vigour. The front ranks were through Peita Street and were now near the Army Headquarters. They shouted their slogans still louder and went on towards the West Gate. Behind the First and Fifth Middle Schools came the Normal School. But as they reached Hsinkai Gate, the Normal School column turned towards Chaoyang Gate along the city wall. It seemed that they were going to take a shortcut to the stadium. The Normal School was followed by Catholic School column. Their front ranks were already entering the main street. The Catholic

School column was on the way towards the cinema from Chaoyang Gate. Within the walls of Girls' Middle School and Girls' Normal School streamers rose high and excited voices were heard. Right now, the students of the two schools were fighting with their teachers, still unable to get out of the schools because of the school authorities.

On the Girls' Middle School playground their principal, a woman with a big bun and thin silver-rimmed spectacles was making a fiery speech, telling the girls not to join the demonstration. Students should not get involved in politics, she told them. They must divorce themselves from any social problems and must concentrate on their school-work. They could take part in these things when they had left school with good academic achievements, but it is quite wrong for students, especially for girls, to take part in demonstrations. "So, back to your classrooms now, all of you," the principal cried almost frothing at the mouth. Red to the nape of the neck, she wielded her fist. The lanky man chief of school affairs declared that if the girl students did not give in and went out to join in the demonstration, he would ask the Police Agency to stop them by force.

The situation was critical. Girl students noisily argued over the advisability of going out. The banner-bearers laid their banners down and wiped away the sweat. At this moment Gyong Ju ran forward and facing the students cried out, "Come on, girls, let's go!"

Gyong Ju raised her clenched fist and waved.

"Don't let the principal deceive you. Why are we studying at school? Surely not just for studying's sake but as daughters of the new age to fight the Japanese imperialists who have overrun our land. Our study has no other purposes. Why, then, are we not allowed to demonstrate against Japanese imperialism? Asking us not to get involved in things outside the school, in politics, is tantamount to asking us to deny the future."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hear, hear!"

The students clapped their hands. The banners, which had been laid down on the ground, rose up again.

"Let's get out!" cried one of the banner-bearers, holding it up on high. The principal and the chief of school affairs turned on Gyong Ju. They pulled her hands, telling her to stop it, not to become an agitator. Gyong Ju quickly freed herself and leapt

up on the platform where the principal had made her speech.

"Let all of us go out. Let us go to the battleground to beat the Japanese imperialists, despite all obstacles. Let us all march out of the gates; Don't be afraid of threats to call in the police to stop us; no educationist can talk like that. The experience of Yuwen Middle School has shown us how to fight those who try to prevent our action. The teachers should also remember what happened with Wang Hsi-tung and Tsao Shang-pei. Forward! Forward, don't be afraid!" Gyong Ju cried out, pointing to the main gate. The principal and the chief of school affairs looked frightened and did not dare to go for Gyong Ju. All the banners rose. Students began to move towards the gate, shouting. Here and there they shouted to form ranks, Gyong Ju darted down the platform like a flying tigress and mixed with the students. She shouted to slogan-leaders and banner-bearers to keep their positions.

"Hold up the banners. Hold them high—down with Japanese imperialist aggressors!"

Gyong Ju shouted the slogan first. The other students followed. They pushed their way through the narrow gate. Banner poles bumped against each other.

Now out of the gate, Paek Sun Hui left the formation and ran towards the Girls' Normal.

"Where are you going?"

"I must give the comrades a warning," replied Paek Sun Hui and darted off. As she reached the main gate of the Girls' Normal she found that the school authorities here were even worse. The gate was closed and tied up with a thick wire. Obviously this had been done to keep the students caged and stop their attempts for the demonstration. The twisted wire was too strong, she could not untie it. She ran along the wall to see if she could clamber over it, but it was too high and she could not find any place to climb over. Then she bounced towards a zelkova tree standing by the wall. She climbed up there throwing her strength into her plimsoled feet. The school grounds within the wall came into view. The girl students were seething. Some of them shook their banners and others shouted. A teacher was speaking to the assembled students, but his voice was drowned in the great outcry.

"Girls, we have already left. Come on out!" Paek Sun Hui cried from a crooked bough that stretched over the wall. After her repeated cries, a group of students came running towards Paek Sun Hui.

"Why are you up there?"

"What are you doing, girls? We have left. Our girls are in Honan Street. Hurry up and come out!"

"But the school affairs chief ordered the janitor to tie up the main gate with a thick wire. This thick," said a student, showing her arm.

"Don't tell me; I've just seen it. As thick as your arm? Nonsense. Go and cut it and come out!"

"Your school has left really?"

"That's what I am telling you. Look at that. Banners are dancing over the roof of the bathhouse."

The girl students darted back into the school grounds. They were shocked to hear that the Girls' Middle had left. "Let's go!" "Let's go!" rose from all over the school grounds. Two students ran to the main gate, each with a hatchet on her shoulder. The sound of the wire being hit hard was heard.

This was a signal and all the students in the school grounds surged towards the gate.

Paek Sun Hui was overjoyed to see the scene. How wonderful the struggle is, she thought. What else could give us pride and delight? Fight hard, open the gate to victory! open the gate to glory!

Soon afterwards there were cries from the gate. Paek Sun Hui slipped down tree and darted off in the direction of the gate.

"Sun Hui, my girl!"

Students of the Girls' Normal hugged Paek Sun Hui. Shouts of slogans rose. Many of them were moved to tears.

As the ranks of the Girls' Normal reached the main street, the Law School column appeared from the direction of North Pole Gate. The Girls' Normal and the Law School joined up into a single column that took up the whole street to march on. At the entrance to the stadium they were joined by a column of students from the Vocational School who had come in from Tesheng Street. They looked like workers, all of them in workers' tunics. Among them were teachers who had unshaven chins.

The entrance to the stadium was congested. The ranks of the three schools were too wide to get in, and they made a fuss, jostling each other. Banner poles got entangled and hit each other. Many voices urged them to go in quickly.

Then came the Yuwen Middle School ranks, the engine depot workers and the wharf workers from Niumahang Street. The

engine depot workers in the railway uniforms stood out. They did not carry any banners but they had enormous poster boards two arms span long, inscribed with slogans. Scores of boards were held aloft over their column. Every time they shouted slogans, they raised their boards. Some of them had very long poles so that they soared high into the air. At the forefront of the wharf workers' column was the tall Chun Taek and behind him the husky Hyon Tae Bong, carrying a banner and shouting slogans. Choe Song Gun walked with the stevedores, grinning broadly. At first glance, he did not look like himself, because he had tied his straw hat on with a towel. The Yuwen Middle School column was led by Choe Jin Guk who carried a banner and called out slogans. The square in front of the stadium was packed by thousands of young people and students. Through the general hubbub, shouts of command were heard, marshalling the lines. They resembled a waving ocean. In the evening wind, the banners fluttered noisily. Voices could be heard warning others to hold their poles up so that the banners would not come down. The column of girls was like a boiling kettle, as they tried to push their way through into the centre of the stadium. Standing on tiptoe, Gyong Ju shouted at them not to push, but the students kept pushing ahead. They raised shrieks, complaining that their bones were being squashed. A girl student moved her fists vehemently around. All the faces were pink and their lips like sunburnt cherries.

The marshals, trying to get the columns ordered, shouted through cardboard megaphones.

There was a tumult outside the stadium too, packs of civil and military police arrived and lined up in the side-street behind one of the shops across the street. Among them were several officers in round caps, who stalked up and down, stroking the holsters at their sides. And yet, spectators continued to flock in nearby. The streets were submerged in a human sea.

Out in Niumahang Street, the leaders of "Kukmin-bu" were watching the scene, among them So Gun Ha, Li Pil Su and old Li Gap Mu leaning on his walking cane. The old man looked more withered since the death of Paek Rak Jin. He no longer even wished to restore the dying nationalist movement.

"What does that banner say?" old Li Gap Mu asked So Gun Ha.

"It says: Down with the Japs."

"A sound slogan. He is the genius who had inherited all the

spirit of Korea, and the way he organizes things is quite out of the ordinary."

Old Li Gap Mu looked thoughtfully at the masses of people, heaving a huge sigh.

Wol Pa, too, had appeared in a street winding in from Niumahang Street. He had just been to Seoul, where he had nearly got caught in a series of wholesale arrests by the Japanese. In the Western clad group around Wol Pa there was a woman in high heeled shoes. They all came from Seoul.

Onlookers were in the streets and on the roofs. The roofs of Sin Dong Ho's were covered by children as are by gourds; Bong Suk and the twin sisters had brought their friends from the neighbourhood.

Before long the sound of clapping hands came from the stadium and shouts of hurrah burst forth. Comrade Kum Song appeared in an elevated platform. In a dark school uniform, he stopped briefly and waved his hand. The shouts of hurrah did not subside. Smiling, he raised both his hands and brought them down again and again. This was a signal to stop applauding. But the audience continued to clap their hands and shout hurrah. Those standing beneath the platform clapped hands still harder. The tears shone in the eyes of Chae Gyong and Kwon Sim, as well as in the eyes of Gyong Ju.

Eventually hurrahs and clapping in the vast stadium died down and left only the sound of the banners fluttering in the wind.

"Friends, comrades!" Comrade Kum Song called out and looked all round the stadium.

"We are gathered here today to do our sacred duty as sons and daughters of Korea. This is the curtain-raiser of the battle."

He stopped and again looked at the dense forest of banners and a sea of serene eyes spreading under it.

"What is our highest duty? It is to win back our country from the crooked hands of the Japanese imperialists. If we do not do this, our duty, we cannot look ourselves in the face as Koreans or, indeed, find our lives worth living. Because we are shouldering this duty, we are strong, and the blood is rising in our hearts and we are full of talent and of wisdom."

Hands were clapped below the platform and the clapping spread quickly to the whole of the stadium. When the audience calmed down, he proceeded to analyse the domestic situation.

"Right now, the Japanese imperialist robbers have found a

cunning, malicious, indeed a monstrous method of plundering up of our land, our natural resources, our goods, our labour—in short, of everything. Take industry, for example. All industries of Korea are in the hands of Japanese robbers. Textiles, raw-silk, spinning are all controlled by Mitsui, anthracite by Mitsubishi, fertilizers and electrical industries by Noguchi; and several other Japanese robbers have laid hands on our electrical industries as well. Nakaguni have set up the South Korean Electric Company in Kunsan. Sugar has been grabbed by Fujiyama. And all these industries use Korean raw materials, Korean manpower, and then they take away the products. Korean peasants are losing their land, the smaller enterprisers their factories, the merchants their shops; the Korean nation is losing everything they have. Mother Korea is bruised now and the dreadful bitter cries of our whole nation resound in the heavens and on earth. Let me take just the peasant question, as an example. In a single year, three years ago, 151,000 peasants lost their land and their homes, some rented, some their own and they were forced to leave their home villages, their families scattered in all directions; 151,000 people! Where, then, did all these peasants go? Sixty-nine thousand of them became workers in Korea, 25,000 were shipped as bond-slaves to Japan, more than a thousand left for Siberia, three thousand came here to Manchuria; and over 40,000 are out of work. They scattered, shedding tears of blood. That is our beloved homeland. This is the plight that she is in."

The audience burst out shouting slogans.

"Down with Japanese imperialist aggressors!"

"Let's drive Japanese robbers out of our land!"

The stadium seethed, and the banners soared high into the air.

Now he spoke of the misery the workers were in. He spoke of how they were whipped on the back, how long they had to work, how many accidents there were, and the starvation wages they received. The workers were living on the brink of death, he said. So there were, as the days went by, more and more strikes. In the last two or three years there had been many strikes: the strike at the Seoul electric company, the Pyongyang printing factory, the Pyongyang hosiery factory, the Mokpo oil refinery and the Seoul textile mill. There had been a strike at the Yonghung granite mine last year, and last month the workers went on strike at the Munpyong oil refinery.

His speech contained a sharp analysis and was based on accurate statistics. It was in no way abstract, but his logic was flawless. Anyhow, his fiery speech was an instrument of science that crushed all and every fallacy and lie.

The wind died out and the streamers did not flutter. The square in the evening sun was as tranquil as a becalmed ocean. It seemed that the whole of the universe was listening to his forceful voice. Now there was no difference between the onlookers and the demonstrators, for the onlookers who had been on the outside had slowly moved in solidly behind the youth and students. There were thick human walls around the demonstrators. A battalion commander of the army garrison and a military police officer listened to his speech, pacing up and down under the platform. If the speaker began to criticize the Chang Tso-lin regime or encourage the people to fight against them, they would blow whistles and take action.

Having fully analysed and shown up the Japs in their true colours, Comrade Kum Song declared that as the first battle against this malicious Japanese imperialism, it was necessary to rise up to prevent their laying a railway between Kirin and Hoeryong.

"Why should we oppose the building of the railway?"

He raised the question and looked round the audience.

"The Japanese imperialists have occupied our Korea and taken everything we have from us. Now they want to use our territory for further aggression. The Japanese imperialists have stationed army divisions in Korea and opened naval ports, expanded the railways and built up munitions industries. All this is not just to hold down Korea by force but to turn it into a base, an advanced base for the invasion of China and Soviet Russia. As for Manchuria, they have already got control of her main arteries. Under the Portsmouth Treaty, they have grabbed the railways south of Changchun that Russia had leased, and robbed 'Kwantung Province'. And they wrung numerous concessions such as those for railway construction and business concessions for the Japanese. In fact, it is not too much to say that real power in Manchuria is now in the hands of the Japanese imperialists."

The military police officer who had been pacing up and down near the platform raised his whistle to his lips. But before blowing it, he was hit on the arm by the battalion commander.

"Don't act rashly. He is speaking the truth. No need to blow

your whistle," said the battalion commander bluntly. The officer blushed and nodded his head.

The speech continued.

"But the Japanese imperialists have realized that in order to invade the continent, Korea alone is not a sufficiently good base. It would be too cumbersome to have to take everything through Korea. A tremendous amount of time and material would be wasted. Therefore they sought a direct link between Japan itself and the continent. And that is what this railway line between Kirin and Hoeryong is about. They have completed the line between Kirin and Tunhua and now they are buckling down to building the railway from Tunhua to Hoeryong. Once that line is completed, the Japanese will transport troops and arms from Japan to Chongjin port and bring them up into the continent via Hoeryong, whence they will also carry off the wealth that they are aiming to rob of China to Japan. We must be clear about the fact that this railway is a direct link to Japan proper through Hoeryong and Chongjin."

Slogans were shouted again. Banners rose, and many fists, and there was a general stir for a while.

"We must crush this cobra head. We must break its poison fangs and stave its skull in. The Japanese imperialists are also laying the rails towards Mingyuehkou from Tunhua at present, where they are plundering the peasants of wide tracts of land, pulling down their houses and destroying whole villages. How can we tolerate such a disastrous situation? We must rise up and fight. We must fight to reclaim our lost country, for the security of Asia and for universal peace. The Japanese imperialists are the common enemy of the Korean and Chinese peoples. I am certain that the Chinese people, too, will join us in our struggle. How can we look on with folded arms while a railway is built along which the Japs will bring in guns, tanks, and troops? How can we tolerate the Japanese imperialists swallowing up Manchuria, and the whole of China, then to attack Soviet Russia? All the Korean people and the whole Chinese nation must rise. All classes, all sections of people, all organisations, and every single person, who loves his nation and his homeland, all must rise in one body and join in the sacred battle to overthrow Japanese imperialists. Let us advance all together as one man with but this single purpose."

All over the square the banners rose and there were loud hurrahs. The spectators, too, joined in the applause. And still they kept streaming in. New waves of people were moving down Niumahang Street and the street opposite the stadium. By now the civil and military police, too, had merged with the spectators.

"Let us overthrow Japanese imperialism!"

Comrade Kum Song shouted this slogan, raising his clenched fist as he wound up his speech. The whole square repeated the slogan with loud hurrah. They shouted themselves hoarse, waving anything they had in hand—banners, caps, anything. Comrade Kum Song saluted back, waving his cap and got down from the platform. The crowd under the platform also clapped their hands and stirred up. The battalion commander nodded his head. He, too, was impressed by the speech, and his face was flushed.

"Comrade Kum Song, I, too, have joined in the ranks."

Paek Sun Gi gripped Comrade Kum Song's hands in his; he had been waiting below the platform. His eyes were brimming with tears. Comrade Kum Song was taken aback.

"Why did you come here? You have not yet recovered...."

"I am all right now. Please accept me into the ranks. You guide me and I will follow with unswerving determination."

"I am delighted, I am delighted."

Comrade Kum Song embraced Paek Sun Gi firmly. The clapping of hands became more fierce.

Paek Sun Hui put her face on Gyong Ju's shoulder and whispered, her eyes streaming.

"Oh, what a wonderful day it is! How can I hold on to it forever? I saw my brother hovering around below the platform but I never dreamed he had made such a decision. Where in this wide world is there anyone as happy as me?"

Paek Sun Hui was too much moved to know what to do.

Now out of Comrade Kum Song's embrace, Paek Sun Gi raced over to Chae Gyong and hugged him.

"We will fight together."

"Ho ho ho. Don't get so excited."

Chae Gyong could not hide the tears, blinking his eyes.

Paek Sun Gi embraced Kwon Sim also. Seeing this, Comrade Kum Song clapped his hands.

Presently, Chae Gyong got up on the platform. He proposed that this rally of the youth and students should appeal to the whole Korean nation and to the Chinese people. And he unrolled

the drafts for the appeals and read them out. The two letters of appeal were adopted amid enthusiastic applause.

The evening shadows were gathering on the square which had been in the sun. The wind rose again. The forest of banners waved violently in the wind. Having wound up the first round of battle, the students were in turmoil getting back into their ranks for the second round. Those who were carrying the cardboard megaphones announced the whereabouts of number one and number two, the code numbers of columns. Each column was going to their assigned districts to carry on with agitation and propaganda. It had been decided from the outset that the demonstration was a beginning, not the end. It was an extensive, dynamic plan: All the youth and students would steadily penetrate to grassroots, spread sparks and help them kindle into flames, so that the whole of Kirin would turn into a sea of fire and rise up to fight the Japanese imperialists. Let us add the greater strength of the popular masses to that of the youth and students, and strike at Japanese imperialism! That was what Comrade Kum Song had planned.

One by one, the columns began to move out of the square. One column marched down towards Chaoyang Gate, another through Niumahang Street towards the Sungari and still another to Tesheng Gate. Again the town became a sea of fluttering banners, with slogans sounding everywhere.

The streets of Kirin had turned into a boiling cauldron. Everything was shaking, moving in and out of the town, with banners aloft. Long after sunset, the slogans still resounded.

CHAPTER XVI

BURNING YOUTH

1

The town of Tunhua was in utter turmoil because of the Kir-Hoe railway line. Workers had come in from many areas—they had been recruited by agents for the Shimada Company, the contractors who were building the line. Every train that came into Tunhua station poured out an avalanche of workers, while many others were brought in by lorry, too. They paid cash in advance and brought in Chinese and Koreans.

Not far from the railway station there was an office with a signboard that read Shimada Company.

The superintendent was sitting in the office on the phone. It was a long distance call and he was yelling into the receiver. We need more men; send up the rails quickly, too, and sleepers and more blocks; and don't forget the cable or the poles: you'll have to be going quick about it to get them to Mingyuehkou before the ground freezes; the government has said that the stretch to Mingyuehkou must be finished before it freezes. The superintendent with the high forehead and narrow chin shrieked into the mouthpiece, beating the top of his desk. Sometimes he got so angry that he shouted, waving around the documents that lay before him. In another room a lot of people were preparing schematic drawings. Land survey was going on side by side with railway building, and electric lines were being installed at the same time. It was virtually lightning speed robbery.

Sleepers kept arriving at the station, some already attached to rails. The waggons carrying them were not unloaded but were shunted on to where the line ended. Rails and sleepers were unloaded to be prefabricated in the yard beside the station where many workers nailed the rails to the sleepers with sledgeham-

mers. The whole station shook with the sound of hammers. The goods waggons loaded with cement, electricity poles and rolled steel were also dispatched forward to the site.

The new line stretched quite a way beyond Tunhua station, and it was several hundred metres longer every day. Locomotives kept coming and going along the new stretch, pulling several goods waggons. Whistles sounded continually. They were in such a hurry that they let the locomotives pass some spots where the railway bed had not yet been properly built. Just so long as the rails had been connected—they did not really care about the bed.

Now the railway stretched 40 *ri* beyond Tunhua, with the bed built and the rails linked up. The work of building the bed and cutting into the hills was going on on a some 10 *ri* stretch, and workers moved about like ants. They dug the earth, cut out stones, pushed wheelbarrows and in some places dug holes for dynamiting. From time to time there were noisy explosions and some people were hit by the stones—but the Japs did not care.

Explosions blasted out stones which flew into the areas where the workers were digging; and the workers fled, shrieking. It seemed that the Japs thought that workers would not dare desert their jobs because of the advance pay, so they could handle how they liked. Human lives were cheap; what mattered was to get the rails down fast as ordered by the government. As soon as a certain length of the bed was completed, the locomotive that had been waiting at the end of the line turned the crane which picked up rails already nailed on sleepers, and a dozen or so workers would support the rails over their heads and lay them down on the bed. Then they turned and tightened the nuts and bolts, and that was that. When this was done, the supervisor in a *happi* with a white circle on the back would yell out "Forward!" waving a blue flag. The locomotive would roll heavily on the rails it had just unloaded, and move the crane to bring down the next lot of rails. Presently, the supervisor would again yell "Forward!" Truly this "Forward!" was the Japanese imperialists' catchword for territorial expansion.

Putting in the electric cables was quicker than laying the rails. The poles were going in ahead as the bed was built, before the rails were ever laid. The voices of the pairs of workers who carried logs from Mt. Paekdu-san with carrying poles were heard in various places down the line. As soon as a pole was up, the electrician would climb up like a squirrel. Carrying a telephone

across his shoulder, he would connect it to the wire that extended continually and shout into the receiver.

Some 50 *ri* away from the site, the surveyors were working desperately. The rails might ever have to be laid and the poles installed before they had finished surveying. Anyway, the surveyors were hard pressed every day as railway and poles were moved up close behind them.

The Shimada Company were pushing the surveyors ahead so as to keep the costs down to rock-bottom, the hell with everything else. The surveyors were harassed by the Shimada Company and the works, and they were in a terrific hurry. Let's stick to the flat area wherever possible to minimise the excavation, was their watchword. So they ran through any bit of flat land regardless of whether it was paddy field or village. If there was a house, then down it came, and if a whole village stood on their way, then that too was simply smashed. And if the peasants were difficult about it, the railway constables soon settled that. They fired their guns, blackmailed, or cajoled them into the belief that they would get a lot of compensation. There were occurrences such as Chang Dok Sun had mentioned in his letter in every village.

Gi Jun got off the train with his colleagues and went straight to see Chang Dok Sun. As instructed by Comrade Kum Song, Chang Dok Sun kept a tiny shop in the town of Tunhua. He had already formed branches of the Paeksan Youth League and infiltrated another organisation in the middle school. Also he had formed a YCL branch from hand-picked active members from all those organisations.

When Gi Jun entered, Chang Dok Sun was delighted beyond words. Having read Comrade Kum Song's letter, his eyes were moist.

"Well, where are the comrades now?"

"I asked them to wait by the noodle house. I was afraid if cops might notice them."

"You needn't worry about that here. There are workers here all over the place. They would just think you had come here to get work, not to start a revolution. Let's go."

Chang Dok Sun looked tougher than ever, and yet he was agile and spoke very fast. His black eyes had lost their mild glint and shone with the flash of wit.

They left the shop, which was a little match-box hovel, almost bare, but as Chang Dok Sun ducked to come out, he locked the

door with a round padlock.

Chang Dok Sun ushered the workers into the noodle house.

"Look, give us two bowls each." Chang Dok Sun said, looking into the lower room where the noodle ricer was creaking. He told the workers that the Tunhua noodle was famous, so they had better have two bowls each.

"Now that the railway works have started here, the noodle houses and inns are thriving. They say that even dogs here carry one *won* banknotes with their mouths. You are lucky to come here for money-making. Where else could you make money other than here?"

He said this with a wink. He did so so that none of them would talk about the forthcoming fight.

That night their battle plans were discussed in a locked room at an inn with several workers sitting outside, talking about desultory topics, keeping a sharp eye even on the inn servants.

Inside Chang Dok Sun sat among the workers and they talked in whispers all through the night. Once in a while Gi Jun and Cha Duk Bo's voices filtered out. Everybody was excited.

Near dawn three workers came out of the inn with Chang Dok Sun, carrying bulky knapsacks on their shoulders. They walked quickly down the road. Back at his shop Chang Dok Sun received the knapsacks from the workers in the dark and dropped them into his cellar.

The operation was to be carried out in three directions. The engine depot workers were divided into two teams; one of which, under the command of Gi Jun and Cha Duk Bo, would put the workers into action by going over to the site where the railway bed was being built, and the other team, in Sin Dong Ho's charge, was to go to the area being surveyed so as to prevent that work being done. Meanwhile, Chang Dok Sun would go to villages where he was to activate youth organisations to arouse the peasant masses. The leaflets brought into the secret cellar would be taken to the country by Chang Dok Sun.

Gi Jun and Cha Duk Bo led team number one to their destination. They could get jobs as soon as they had arrived. Some of them used wheelbarrows, some dug the earth and still others crushed stones. The Japs had brought too many workers, and there were many blind sides. Though dozens of overseers bustled about yelling and cursing, some workers took a nap in the bushes for a few hours, while others stood there doing nothing, the blades

of shovels stuck into the ground, only working when their overseers looked their way. There were not enough tools and every morning workers fought to secure them. Clever ones did not go back even if they could not get tools; if only they got shovels without blades or sticks, they pushed those into the ground to use them as levers to move stones all day long. And when dusk came round, they took out the stones perspiring heavily, and the stupid overseers gave them workslips; sometimes they would pay more than usual for the "hard" work. The Japs were in such a hurry that they had no time to control the workers strictly.

These were the circumstances in which the engine depot workers began their propaganda. But propaganda work was different from crushing stones with hammers or digging earth with shovels. They talked in every corner saying that the workers should rise up against the project, but the unorganized workers failed to regard the struggle as urgent, the way Gi Jun or Cha Duk Bo did. The prospect was not encouraging.

Unable to hit at any bright idea, Gi Jun sat on a mound of earth and sighed.

"How about gathering them together and making a speech?"

"Are you crazy? Look at those constables hovering like a pack of dogs. Make a speech to the workers?" Gi Jun remonstrated Cha Duk Bo.

"Then what shall we do? Should we workers go back without carrying out the task assigned us by the organisation?"

"Don't be hasty. Let me think it over."

Gi Jun was lost in thought, staring ahead, with his slightly sunken eyes.

This is no good, he said to himself. I have to make sure that team number two now on the survey site start working. To confuse this work site....

Gi Jun clenched his fists. At night he sent a message to team number two to go into action. Members of the team promptly did as he instructed. They came out in the night and pulled out survey stakes. They pulled them out in both directions. The stakes were thrown into the grass or into streams. The Japs did not find out about it until the stakes had been pulled out over nearly 30 *ri*, not until they looked for survey stakes to move ahead with building the bed. Two overseers wandered about looking for the stakes all day. They checked the grass for 10 *ri* around, in all directions but they couldn't find any stakes. Both of them were

furious and they dashed off to the surveyors on their bicycles. They darted like mad in their Japanese field shoes that looked like the cloven hooves of pigs. Why the hell hadn't they driven in any stakes as they surveyed? Those cross-patches deliberately didn't drive in any stakes because we were catching them up too fast, was what the two overseers were thinking. They met the survey team on a plain where a fierce evening wind was blowing. There was a fist fight, and the survey engineer, his assistants and the stake drivers were beaten until their bones rattled, and one of the assistant engineers' spectacles were crushed.

Next day the survey was stopped, and the stakes were inspected. The Shimada Company superintendent himself was there. They found out that there were very few stakes not only over the first ten *ri*, but over the whole distance that had been surveyed. One of the survey engineers who had been beaten up worst found a stake lying in the grass and trembled like a leaf. Then the company supervisor found another. Now they realised that the revolutionary forces had infiltrated their site, and suddenly they were on the watch. Three mounted constables came over, raising dust they trotted across the plain and fired their guns into the air.

However, Sin Dong Ho and his team members were lying up on the hill where red leaves were falling and singing, determined to pull out the rest lot of stakes as soon as they were driven in.

The incident of the survey stakes gave a great shock to everybody at the site. Seeing the surveyors having to repeat their work, the workers on the site started talking to each other in excited whispers.

"Who on earth pulled out the stakes? God only knows...."

"There must be some organisation at work on our site. Some young agitators came round earlier and spoke in whispers. And they say a large demonstration was held in Kirin against this project, you know? They might belong to the same organisation."

"I'd be delighted if they managed to stop the Japs continuing with this project, so that it had to be given up."

"Let's wait and see. There'll be a big fight in any case."

They were gripped by a strange premonition. Taking advantage of this, Gi Jun mounted another propaganda campaign among the workers and saw to it that leaflets were scattered in every street in Tunhua.

Every night, leaflets were spread all over the town, into the yards of houses, on the well-sides, at the railway station and in school playgrounds. Appeals were pasted on the walls and wooden fences along the streets. They read:

"To workers here for the railway project!

"The Kir-Hoe line is a railway of aggression with which the Japanese imperialists are going to extend the area in which they can oppress and plunder the Korean and Chinese peoples. Rise up against them. Stop them laying this railway line for which they knock down our houses and destroy our farm land and trample on the backs of our fellow countrymen!

"Stop work, all of you. Go back home to your parents, wives and children!

"Now is the time for the workers to unite. All of you, stand up to fight the sacred battle against the Japanese imperialists!"

The workers read the appeals on their way to work. They spoke in undertones, commenting that it had burst out, it had begun. Many walked away unobserved. Since they had received advance pay, the quicker they left the better. Gradually the site became deserted. One day no dynamitists showed up and the sound of hammers ceased. And quite a few barrows laid on their sides by the railway. The overseers yelled and shrieked, their Adam's apples wiggling.

Meanwhile Chang Dok Sun was rousing the peasants in the villages ahead. Through the network of youth organisations, he gathered the peasants of a dozen or so villages in a hamlet called Tatsun, a village where several hundred houses would soon have to make way for the Kir-Hoe railway line.

As their complaints against Japs reached the extreme, the peasants flooded into this Tatsun. Every peasant had something in hand; banners, clubs made of pick handles, sickles, A-frame carrier sticks and even metal rakes. The peasants who had lost their homes or land clenched their teeth and each resolved to kill at least a few Japs at all costs.

The village of Tatsun was full of people. Young villagers were busy running about to arrange formations.

After a brief protest rally, Chang Dok Sun arranged the formations so as to close in on the town of Tunhua from three directions.

In midday the formations of peasants surged into the streets

of Tunhua carrying banners and shouting slogans. They came in from south, north and east.

In the town, the Kirin engine depot workers made speeches here and there. They laid bare the aggressive Japanese imperialist plot on the continent and appealed to workers and townspeople to come out and join in the demonstration. Gi Jun climbed up on the corrugated iron roof of the general shop and shouted to the workers gathered at the crossroads.

"You are the working class. The working class who must stand in the forefront of the revolution. Don't waver. March forward! Form your ranks and march!"

Then he walked rattling about the roof, and scattered leaflets around. And he shouted. "We are the working class who will destroy the old society and build a new society. Let all of us form ranks and march forward together!"

The workers who had come out into the street began to stir. Dynamiters and pole carriers came to the fore. They waved their hands and shouted at each other to line up. A huge column was formed in no time and they started to march. The column moved forward. At this moment another column, the students, burst out of Tunhua Middle School. They had many banners and loudly shouting slogans, they fell in behind the workers' column. The whole town of Tunhua was alive with the footsteps and shouts.

2

In Kirin, the struggle was also coming to a head. Every day the students made speeches to the masses, urging them to take part in the struggle. The speeches were made in the streets, in back-alleys, in the yards of the houses. Lectures were held repeatedly at Youth House, Five Star Hall, schools, churches and cinemas.

Everybody in and around the town was seething with excitement.

At night the leadership gathered in the cellar of the Yowang Mausoleum and analysed the day's events. Comrade Kum Song sat down in the candle light, hearing reports and issuing instructions. YCL and AIYL chiefs climbed down and up the basement

ladder. Comrade Kum Song made sure that appeals and leaflets were scattered and that lectures were being organized in dozens of villages around Kirin. Members of the AIYL branches of Chang-tou Village, Liberation Village and Changlin-tung had been mobilized in this work. One day an urgent message came from Chang Dok Sun. It detailed the struggle at Tunhua. As soon as the demonstration had been organized, all the Japs had fled; some of them had hidden in goods waggons, where they had been beaten until their bones rattled. The railway constabulary had become so frightened at the spirit of the masses that they fired on the town from the suburbs before they ran for it. The workers had set fire to the piles of sleepers and poles in the railway compounds, and to the construction company's offices, so the sky of Tunhua had been aglow all night. Most of the workers had scattered and gone home. Chang Dok Sun said he was writing this letter because he did not know whether they had to guard the town of Tunhua so as to prevent the Japs from getting started again.

"Well done. You workers have shown that you have guts." Comrade Kum Song was well satisfied and shook the shoulder of Li Song Nam who had brought the message. He wrote a reply right on the spot, asking them to return to Kirin immediately.

"Well, Comrade Song Nam, off you go and give this letter to Comrade Gi Jun or Comrade Chang Dok Sun and be sure to tell them to come back quickly. Do you have an inside pocket on your jacket?"

"Yes, I have."

Comrade Kum Song put the letter into his inside pocket and even buttoned it up.

That night when Song Nam left, a youth called Kim Ik Chol came in from Changchun to see Comrade Kum Song. They met in an upstairs room at an inn. At first Kim Ik Chol looked glum, but after the exchange of a few words the first impression was shattered; he found the visitor was a bit too carefree and easy. Soon after he met Comrade Kum Song, he spoke ill of Li Byong Mo in Chialun as a man of insignificant calibre. He said he intended to form an AIYL branch at Changchun, too, but Li Byong Mo was prejudiced against him and had covertly prevented him from doing so.

"Why does he have prejudice against you?"

"To be honest, I am working at a Japanese firearm store as

a salesman. But I am not working for Yoshida, the owner, just to bring profits to him. I got the job at the shop for my own purposes. I think I have provided the Independence Army with 40 or 50 Mauser revolvers. They have failed to win independence for Korea and just wasted those guns."

"But why is Comrade Li Byong Mo prejudiced against you?"

"He says he is not sure that he can trust me because I am a salesman at a Japanese shop. He said a bat turns to a bird at night and to a rat in the day; so one should observe everything under the sun with the eye that sees the rat as a bird and the bird as a rat. Particularly as far as I am concerned, he claims, there are many reasons why he should be extra cautious in dealing with me."

"But how did you meet Comrade Li Byong Mo in Chialun?"

"My parents live in Chialun. So I go there often."

"Then did you meet Comrade Kang Chang Su who went there recently?"

Comrade Kum Song had inspected Chialun and Kuyushu where Li Byong Mo and Cho Hak Bong had been assigned, and, on his return here, he had transferred Kang Chang Su there from Liberation Village in order to improve work in that part of the country.

"You mean the man who is said to have worked his way through school by delivering newspapers? I did meet him a few days ago. But I thought he had had some warning from Li Byong Mo, so I made no mention of the AIYL affair. I was only anxious to come up to Kirin because I had been told that the AIYL had begun to strike its roots at Kirin."

For a long while Comrade Kum Song asked various questions and tried to understand the man. He inquired about the visitor's class foothold, his background and his education, and about the group in the Independence Army he had had connections with. And the visitor was very open. He had a very good class background and as for his connections with the Independence Army he had clandestinely sold pistols, rifles and ammunitions to people in "Sinmin-bu" and also to those in "Chongui-bu". In several cases he had even falsified books to give them arms free of charge. He had finished primary school and had been through middle school by correspondence and had read quite a lot of Marxist-Leninist books.

"Well, do you have many comrades who can join in Chang-

chun?"

"Of course. There are so many of them. I saw nothing uncommon about those who compose the AIYL in Chialun. We have a lot of young men who have similar ideological attainments."

Kim Ik Chol talked a lot about the situation in Changchun.

"Comrade Ik Chol, how about staying here for a few days and taking part in the demonstration?"

"I will. Now I am here, I don't want to return without doing anything."

"Well, stay then. And we shall have further talks...."

Comrade Kum Song wanted to get in touch with him and understand him. The inn yard was busy and noisy. A students' propaganda team was going to do propaganda even among the guests at the inn. Kim Ik Chol followed Comrade Kum Song downstairs and greeted the students by clapping his hands.

A few days after he met Kim Ik Chol, Comrade Kum Song sent out instructions to all the organisations to launch into a large-scale demonstration. The whole city of Kirin erupted like a volcano. The centre and suburbs had been alive with shouts of hurrahs and slogans from early morning.

This demonstration was quite different from the first one. There were more banners and many students held placard boards such as the engine depot workers had used the last time. A long column of citizens appeared in the new quarter of the town outside the West Gate. Groups of citizens were making a lot of noise in front of the noodle house in Niumahang Street in their endeavour to form ranks.

That morning Paek Sun Gi was clean-shaven. He was in much better health now than he had been when he returned from Seoul. After sleep he felt his body in full strength.

He felt particularly so this morning, and after washing, he briefly exercised his neck and waist. Then he started arranging books. He had read great many books that Comrade Kum Song had sent him as well as quite a lot he had borrowed from others, including social science and literature. He put aside the books he had borrowed, deciding that he must return them today. Then he looked more closely at the books in his shelves, and wondered what he could do with them. Those books reflected his complicated mental development. Among them were many he now regarded as totally useless, books that had engendered a thicker

mist for his wandering soul and books that were full of virus of corruption stretching out temptation to his writhing spirit. He brought down a trunk from the top of the bookcase, thinking he might ask his sister to put these books away in the storeroom after his departure. He picked out the books he wanted to read and which he had not yet read and put them into the trunk. He also folded a suit of clothes his mother had sat up late to mend for him. She had also brought his father's pocket watch, which she had said he could sell when he lacked his school fees. It was as big as his palm. His mother must have wound it for the second hand was ticking, though the other hands showed the wrong time.

Paek Sun Gi had no intention of selling this watch for his school fees. He put it back on the desk. I will have to set it right and hang it on the wall, he thought. Then mother will see it and it will remind her of father.

Paek Sun Gi looked around, wondering what else he should put into his trunk.

As he hurried with his preparations for departure, Seoul came to his mind. How is everything with Sim Chang Do? he wondered. If he had been indicted, it would have been reported in the press, but I have not been able to find that news. Did the Japs try him in secret? I wonder whether Han Chang Bok is still studying in Seoul. And is Han Yun, his father, still engaged exclusively in the sale of domestic products? I don't know whether Chang In Uk, the leader of Yonjong Society is still advocating autonomy at his palatial mansion at the base of Mt. Pukak? That corpulent body in hemp clothes, that glossy skin, that arrogant air, the menacing speech and the disdainful tone—and yet he had kissed Japanese imperialism, the despicable flatterer—I don't understand why I used to call on such foul scum. Why did I visit that hell-hole with tears at heart; what did I expect to hear from those foul mouths? But I shook the jingling bell I had bought at the domestic goods shop and ridiculed at Han Yun; oh, I am ashamed even to think about it. Now that I have arrived at a new height, the more I think of what happened in Seoul, the more I sweat. When shall I be completely at ease, as if these things had never happened!

But Paek Sun Gi was seeing a different Seoul. He felt as if his arena of activity was waiting beyond the skylines, an arena of activity where flames would rise.

Paek Sun Gi had packed his things roughly and gone down

to the boarded floor of the kitchen. His mother was busy rattling around preparing breakfast.

"Has Sun Hui gone out already?"

"Of course. She went out a long time ago; she made her own breakfast. Can't you hear the shouts in the street?"

"Why not?"

"I went out just now, and saw such an amazing scene," said his mother setting the table for her son.

"Mother, I don't feel like breakfast now. I will have it when I come back from the street."

"Why are you going to the street? And when do you leave?"

"I am going to consult Comrade Kum Song. By the way, mother, I have something to tell you before I leave. Please give a helping hand to Sun Hui. I am not going to Seoul just to study; I am going there to make revolution."

"I can guess."

"So, all our family must take this road. Everybody has something to do for the revolution. As you always say, you must follow Mother Kang Ban Sok's example."

"I know what to do. How can I sit idle after the way your father met his death?" The mother's face clouded, as she thought of her husband. But she quickly changed her mood and wiped the saucepan with a piece of cloth.

After talking to his mother, Paek Sun Gi went out of the house and he felt somehow light-hearted. He was convinced that if he went straight ahead along the clear-cut road, he would be all right. In fact, he had suggested to Comrade Kum Song that he should stay in Kirin to work for the revolution. But Comrade Kum Song said that since he had started studying at Seoul, he had better leave for Seoul. He added that he should learn more from the grim reality back in the homeland and temper himself there, and that he should guide the young people wandering in that dark along the revolutionary road. At first he feared he might be unable to do such a thing in that confused city, Seoul. But the fear and anxiety had left him. His resolve had hardened and a new excitement leapt up within his body.

He came out into Niumahang Street, which was close-packed with crowds of people marching. A column of students marched ahead, banners and placard boards overhead. They soared up into the air as the students shouted slogans, as if to pierce the sky. Peita Street was still more crowded. The whole

city of Kirin seemed to be sucked into a whirling bouquet of flowers; it seemed as if a river of waving banners was flowing. The banners soaring up in Honan Street looked like fluttering wings. Shouts were raised here, and there, and everywhere; shouts, shouts, shouts echoed through the city and shook it wildly.

Paek Sun Gi joined a student formation, marching along Niu-mahang Street. At last on this square, he was keeping with the revolution. A drop of water which had fallen into the bog of anguish and disillusion pushed its way through the grass and found a stream to make its way to the centre of this river, after such writhing agony!

A young student walking beside Paek Sun Gi, was carrying a huge banner, perspiring heavily. He held out his handkerchief for him to wipe the sweat and asked him to let him take a turn.

"Never mind. I cannot hand this banner over to anybody!"

The student was taken aback, wide-eyed, clasping the pole of the banner more tightly.

"Ho ho. Then let me wipe your sweat."

Paek Sun Gi wiped away the sweat streaming down the student's neck. The downy hair, the thin neck—they were a happy generation who had found their way straight to the square of truth without such agony as he. To whom would they give the banners they were holding in their hands!

Paek Sun Gi met Comrade Kum Song on a hill near Te-sheng Gate. He had given some instructions to Chae Gyong and seen him off to the outskirts of the town; and was watching to see how the demonstration was going.

"It has begun. Look over there. That which now shakes the earth is the force we have tended with such devotion. How wonderful it is!" Comrade Kum Song said repressing his excitement.

"Korea is breathing."

"She is. That is the strong young breath of the new Korea. Why should we not be proud of our own strength when there is that strong breath? Why should we not believe in our own strength?" Comrade Kum Song added. "The struggle is so worthwhile. Well, look at that. The leaflets are flying up. And they are not mere leaflets; they are symbols of a new day. How lovely like a flock of birds, flying up from their nests."

Comrade Kum Song laughed, holding his arms akimbo. They were not leaflets, they were truly birds. The sky was covered with

flocks of birds with glittering wings.

Comrade Kum Song walked down the grassy slope. How anxiously he had waited for this day! Ever since he formed the DIU at Huatien, he had been pulling in new comrades for this day, dedicating his heart and soul, and all his love to each of them. To make this dream come true. The dream of thousands of people surging forward with one idea, making for the enemy's stronghold—this dream was being turned into reality and the banners waving on the square for the first showdown. The waves were surging towards the shore of victory sweeping away all injustice in the world. How nice it would be if these waves grew larger, higher, stronger, these waves surging right before our eyes.

Comrade Kum Song was sunk deep in thought. He thought his line and methods had been right.

Forces must be united this way. To implement the revolutionary line what is important is how to unite the revolutionary forces. We must unite the whole anti-Japanese patriotic forces around the communist forces, and with this formidable power we must force the Japanese imperialists out and win Korea's independence. Otherwise it will be impossible to win the revolution. That great vitality being demonstrated right now in the streets testifies eloquently to this truth.

"I will leave for Seoul by tonight's train," said Paek Sun Gi.

"Leave. Leave without delay. We must map out and organize our revolution nationwide."

"I told you I would work at Kirin, because I thought I had to learn about the revolution under your guidance."

"That wouldn't be a bad idea, but it is also important to learn from what is happening in the homeland and influencing the young people who are groping in the dark is important, too. So you had better go, but remember that a bigger revolutionary task might devolve on you some day."

Comrade Kum Song went down the hill, followed by Paek Sun Gi. Paek Sun Gi had a lump in his throat. The sight of Comrade Kum Song made him feel strong. He thought that despite her misfortunes, Korea had come to enjoy great happiness.

At this moment, there was a secret conference going on in the basement of the Japanese consulate about how to cope with this incident in Kirin. The meeting was attended by the special envoys from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Railways, two colonels from the Ministry of the Army and Kunihiko, who

had been sent by the "Government-General in Korea". Kunihiko had come here a few days ago, while the special envoys had arrived by special train last night. On their arrival in Kirin they had been stunned to hear about the incident in Tunhua. The two colonels banged on the table as they attacked the Foreign Office which was responsible for the control of Koreans in Manchuria. When they left Japan they did not betray their views but here, they concentrated their attack on Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi who was also Foreign Minister.

"The government is taking too easy a policy, is it not? Do you have any power of judgment? If we are to conquer Manchuria and Mongolia we must do it in one go, by force of arms. What? we shouldn't be nervous? What do you mean? What we need is a tough policy. Why are you not controlling the Koreans? Why do you leave that young man alone, who is said to be President of the Ryugil Students Association? What? he is still student? Oh, no, sir. He is an extraordinary personality, a menace to our Empire, not a student. He is the genius who is leading the masses. From a burnt area a stronger bud will grow. If you don't know this and regard Korea simply as a burnt-up place, you are nothing but fools."

The colonels, furious, kept jumping up and down. The special envoy from the Foreign Office and the consul in Kirin changed colour and stayed silent. One of the colonels asked an interpreter to call up the Chinese Army Headquarters. Banging the table with his thick-knuckled fist, he castigated Army Headquarters: "Why do you tolerate such riots? Aren't you concerned that riot may lead to disaster in your relation with the Japanese Empire? Our Empire is very concerned about your attitude towards this incident in Kirin. If you connive at such riot by the Koreans, going so far as to neglect keeping of peace in your own country, I think, our Empire will have to take a resolute attitude. We are ready to take emergency measures, to resort to force of arms. Are you going to crush this riot today or not?" The colonel yelled at the interpreter to translate exactly what he had said. But the Chinese Army Headquarters' reply was much the same way as before: We cannot make a move unless we have instructions from the Supreme Commander in Mukden. Get on to Mukden if you want us to take action.

The interpreter trembled like a leaf as he translated this reply. The atmosphere in the basement was grim. The Foreign Of-

fice envoy remained seated, dejected as ever, while the Ministry of Railways representative and Kunihiko blew out smoke, watching the two Ministry of the Army colonels sitting by the telephone. There were continued cries outside and they could hear something being thrown in. One of the colonels shouted at the consul to open fire. Then the Foreign Office envoy jumped up and yelled at him to refrain from such a thoughtless act. Loud slogans sounded outside in the street.

"Down with Japanese aggressors!"

"Stop building the Kir-Hoe railway line!"

The masses who encircled the consulate shouted these slogans from all sides. In front of the main gate of the consulate, Kim Ik Chol, salesman at a firearm shop, climbed up the shoulders of a foundry worker from the engine depot and started to make a speech in Japanese. He pushed back the visor of his cap and shouted at the guards standing at the main gate of the consulate.

"I am standing up here to ask you one thing. Why do you guard this den of robbers, guns in hand? We don't regard you sons of the workers and peasants as our enemy. Our enemies are fellows such as Saigo Takamori, Ito Hirobumi, Tanaka Giichi, Saito Minoru, and landlords and capitalists."

"Hum, he is doing it well. Excellent," murmured Chae Gyong standing a little way behind. He clapped his hands to encourage Kim Ik Chol. All the engine depot workers around followed suit. Kim Ik Chol was exalted; he took off his cap and wiped the sweat off his forehead, and raised and shook his hand.

"Put down your guns. No, come over to our side with your guns, and aim them at the consulate! Don't be afraid to turn your guns at the consulate! That is the true, right road for you to take." Kim Ik Chol shouted, shaking his cap in his hand. The two guards said something. One of them even grinned. Some more fellows, chin-strapped, looked out from inside the gate. Kim Ik Chol finished his speech, but seeing the guards still standing with guns in their hands, he got furious and pulled a pistol out of his bosom.

"You bastards, you think you are the only one who have guns? We have them, too," shrieked Kim Ik Chol, wielding his pistol.

"What the hell is he doing?!" thundered Chae Gyong, dumbfounded. He elbowed through the crowd and hit Kim Ik Chol at the leg. Kim Ik Chol tumbled down from the foundry worker's shoulders.

"Did I do anything wrong?" asked Kim Ik Chol, saucer-eyed.
"Why do you wield the gun? If you want to speak, you speak.
We are not going to fight with guns now, are we?"

"Well, I just made a show."

There was a burst of laughter around. Kim Ik Chol blushed and put the gun back.

The ranks that had surrounded the Japanese quarters and the Japanese consulate, started to move in two directions. One formation went towards the centre of town past Wenkuang Middle School, the other made for Chaoyang Gate, making a detour down the road past the railway station.

"What kind of pistol is that?" inquired Comrade Kum Song, walking along beside Kim Ik Chol. He had been informed by Chae Gyong that Kim Ik Chol had wielded a pistol recklessly.

"Browning."

"Why do you carry it in your bosom?"

"I'm a firearm salesman. Why shouldn't I carry a weapon?"

Comrade Kum Song smiled and said.

"Comrade Ik Chol, you must not pull the gun like that. A gun is not a toy. Do you think the enemy will be frightened by one pistol? We must use guns when they are demanded by the revolution, when they are vitally needed.

"The day will surely come when we shall carry out our revolution arms in hand. Then we shall use them to our hearts' content."

"I understand."

"You must not wield guns like that after an AIYL organisation is formed in Changchun. We do not make revolution like terrorists. For the present, we must unite the masses as firmly as a rock by organizing and with propaganda. It is not revolutionary to shout and make a lot of noise, divorced from the masses. We must go deep among the people, organize them, persuade and educate them, so that they recognize the truth of revolution, and themselves consciously organize and fight with one will and one purpose. That is revolution."

"I understand," replied Kim Ik Chol, walking at his side, holding his cap in his hand.

"Don't take part in the demonstration any more, and leave for Changchun tonight. You must work in the forefront to set up an organisation in Changchun. And get in touch with Comrade Kang Chang Su. I will send specific instructions to Chialun."

"I will do my level best to do the task that you have given me." Kim Ik Chol pledged, firmly shaking Comrade Kum Song's hand in his own, which were wet with sweat.

3

Old Li Gap Mu had been writing his essay for three days now. Interested in history, he had a long-standing habit of recording anything he heard or saw, if it concerned his nation's destiny. He had begun doing this without any particular aim; he simply had a vague idea that now that the country was in ruins and there were no institutions of historical studies nor historiographers, he should record events and the exploits that might in the future fill this vacuum in his nation's history after the country had regained its independence. But that idea had come after he had joined the independence movement in earnest; at the beginning he had been writing for a hobby. For over 20 years he had recorded all events in town and country and the moves of different groups of the Independence Army in Manchuria. But lately he had almost given up writing. The shelves in his study were full of his manuscripts—he did not want to read them any more so he had simply locked them up. The death of Paek Rak Jin and the low spirits of "Kukmin-bu" had left him feeling that there was no hope of recovering his withered body and soul. Now he no longer wrote historical essays, and whenever he felt bored he would make stone ink and draw the Four Gracious Plants (plum, orchid, chrysanthemum and bamboo—Tr.). But his bamboo and orchid too had lost spirit. He used to send the better ones to his close acquaintances, and for this reason, he had been inclined to draw pictures, but these days he had completely lost even this desire. He was so gloomy that he fiddled with his papers, writing brushes and stone ink just to kill time.

But a few days ago, he had gone to the stadium, taken by So Gun Ha. There he saw the strength of the masses swaying like an ocean. And he heard the speech made by Comrade Kum Song who fostered their strength and guided it. Old Li Gap Mu's heart

which had been withering, suddenly began to warm. For one whole night he could not sleep, and walked up and down his room. A picture of bamboo and plum, that he had drawn the day before, was spread out on the floor. He crumpled it up and put it in the waste-paper basket. He sat thoughtfully for a while, before he went to his wife to get the key and opened the door of his study. By the light of a candle he saw piles of faded manuscripts that he had written over the last 20 years. The ones at the bottom were worm-eaten and faded and smelt musty. He wondered if they would ever come out in print, and felt utterly dejected. But he thought of the heartrending stories in those pages, and of his own tears and sighs, of the sorrows that marked every page, and he was tormented by guilty conscience for his insincerity, for having turned his face away from them, even if only for a while.

Korea will be free, the old man thought; suddenly he was convinced of this to the bottom of his heart. Again he recalled the spirit he had noticed at the stadium and Comrade Kum Song's speech. A new, dependable generation capable of shouldering Korea's future, had grown up, and that generation had declared war against the enemy. Had the struggle for national liberation not entered the right orbit?

Old Li Gap Mu again remembered the dead who had sometimes laughed and sometimes wailed, who fell, without even breaking faith. He was anxious to trace back the footsteps of that bloody struggle.

He hung the lantern on the post and leafed through several manuscripts. The last chapter ended with a record of Paek Rak Jin who in the winter of 1927 had been murdered by the Japanese imperialist police at Changchun railway station, delivered to them by the traitor Yu Sang Jo. His hands shaking, old Li Gap Mu mumbled to himself: "How pitiable! A hero has appeared to save our nation, but you went to the other world, before there was hope for the future...."

The old man turned page after page recalling many patriots who had shed their blood, laid down their lives, before the dawn of national liberation. He decided to record a new history, for the old generation of the independence movement, himself among them.

Old Li Gap Mu went straight back to his room, rubbed down an ink-stick to make fresh stone ink and cut some sheets of paper. Sitting upright at a small low ebony table, the old man shut his

eyes and pictured the hard-fought battle for independence, with its many twists and turns, before he took up his writing brush. Clear dewdrops formed at the corners of his eyes, fell and wet the freshly cut paper.

"This author believes," the old man wrote, "that just as you cannot support a big crumbling house on one pillar, so it is impossible to hope the country will prosper at a time when it is full of foreign barbarians, and traitors chew the beams and gnaw at the rafters. It is hard even to hold up a leaning house, and still harder to reerect a house that is already toppling. Months and years have passed since the time of *Ulsa*, *Chongmi* and *Kyongsul* which put the nation to such shame; our loyal countrymen have drenched our mountains and rivers with the blood they shed and plaints of our people have filled heaven and earth, but our whole land, three thousand *ri*, is still being plundered by our enemy; for the old there is no ground for a decent burial; for the young no history of their own country to learn. Parents have no rice to feed their children, and wives no place to make a home. The blood and sweat of the workers and peasants have turned into the fat on the enemy's backs. What is the reason for all this?"

Old Li Gap Mu sat up writing all night, with a heavy heart. He was no longer as strong as he used to be, but his sunken eyes had a new sparkle.

"It is not natural for man to live in the same cave with beasts, nor under the same sky with enemies; The outcry against the Japanese has shaken every corner of our land, but the Righteous Volunteers broke their spears on the banks of the Tuman-gang and Amnok-gang Rivers and the Independence Army's guns have rusted in alien wilderness. How pitiful that the loyal Choe Ik Hyon should be buried on Tsushima islands, that Ryu Rin Sok should have breathed his last in Manchuria. Uncounted loyalists who held the banners of justice for our ruined nation fell in action, only to increase the nation's grudge. The hurrahs of the year of *Kimi* (1919) turned into a sea of blood under the swords of the Japanese barbarians, and our nation's history of five thousand years is witnessing a setting sun and the ruins of the time-honoured castles are overgrown with weeds.

"Since his early years this writer has been interested in history, has traced back the footsteps of our fathers, grieved at times and delighted at times. But his anger is so great that he will gouge his flesh and scrape his bones for his country. Twenty and more

years have elapsed since this author pledged to the Providence not to stop half way in the fight to throw out the enemy. Though his determination remains unchanged, being a little man, a soldier without a commander, whom should he rely on?

"How sad, how merciless is the Providence that did not give us a hero to lead our people; the Korean independence movement was reduced to a rabble without a command until it finally scattered. Thus the declining sun is setting on the horizon and the geese cry forlorn in the autumn sky. Thunderous shouts have reached the ears of the old scholar who has lived his life in vain. What is it?

"October, the year of *Mujin*"

Old Li Gap Mu stopped writing and raised his head. He saw the scene at the stadium, felt it shake under the waves of people and ringing with their shouts. Still ringing in his ears was the stentorian voice of Comrade Kum Song speaking on that high platform in the vast ocean of demonstrators.

"...What is our highest duty? It is to win back our country from the crooked hands of the Japanese imperialists. If we do not do this, our duty, we cannot look ourselves in the face as Koreans or, indeed, find our lives worth living. Because we are shouldering this duty, we are strong, and the blood is rising in our hearts and we are full of talent and of wisdom."

Every word of Comrade Kum Song's speech had gone straight to the old man's heart, and aroused in him hopes of life and the will to fight, just as the life-saving water does the dried-up, cracked earth.

A cock fluttered somewhere. The leaves of trees rustled in the back yard which had been silent. Apparently a morning wind was rising. The candle danced. He jerked up his head to see the eastern window getting lighter. He thought he had heard distant cries. Now the street, that had been deadly silent all night long, began to breathe. He could hear hurried footsteps, and singing voices echoing faintly.

Old Li Gap Mu again lifted his brush and dipped it into the ink. He outlined the contents of Comrade Kum Song's speech and with a beating heart wrote:

"Many a loyalist grieved at the destruction of our country has written about justice, but who has ever put forward a view so high-minded that it touched the hearts of twenty million people? The Classics say that when a country is humiliated, its loyal subjects perish; And you did die, patriotic and loyal to the end.

How terrible it is that you closed your eyes without hearing the great strategy for national liberation that is shaking heaven and earth. It is not vain to say that heaven sends down a hero. It is only a year or so since he, still only a student, set foot on this land of turmoil. Yet ever since then he has fostered that strength until it shakes the 'seven seas'. This is not the deed of a mere mortal. As he made clear in his speech, it is will of the Providence to unite this country's liberation movement, with a single sacred purpose, and to awaken and guide it, so that it may form a stream, and that many streams merge into a river, and many rivers into a great ocean. Who, having witnessed this strength, can claim that Korea's blood, Korea's soul will not live on to make a great new history?

"You are splendid, oh son of Korea who has built up that strength! A new day is dawning, a new history to add to those five thousand years. There is a saying that a hero is born when a country is in chaos, and in the darkness of our country's ruin, our fellow countrymen came to greet the son of our nation's regeneration.

"Resplendent is Korea's future, for the first chapter of her new history has begun, and may be read in every land as we march forward with pride."

Having finished writing, old Li Gap Mu read through what he had written and blew out the candle. Then, as if receiving a guest of honour whom he had long awaited, he threw open the doors. A bright sun had risen, shedding its rays across the red autumn sky.

4

The great demonstration continued. This morning, the Wenkuang Middle School and Normal School students were gathered by the Sungari before sunrise and they surged towards Chaoyang Gate. The Yuwen Middle School and Law School assembled in the Vocational School's grounds and mapped out a new plan for struggle and went towards the centre through Tesheng Gate. By sunrise, all the streets were animated.

Formations of peasants surged in from adjacent villages.

Those from Liberation Village and Changlin-tung pushed their way through the West Gate.

On the far bank of the Sungari, peasant formations from Changtou Village, Lichia Village and Huiyang-tung appeared. There was a great commotion when two boats had to carry all those people, crossing again and again.

Because the boatmen had stopped work to join the demonstration, traffic on the Sungari was all one way. All the boats were coming, and none going. There were a forest of sails in mid-river. Rafts kept flowing down and people on them yelled to the boats to get out of their way. Some rafts hit the prows of boats and spun around.

That day the demonstrators looked as if determined to carry off the whole town of Kirin. The Army Headquarters could not remain indifferent now. They sent out the military police, and the Police Agency their own men. The Japanese constabularies who had been kept alert within the compounds of the consulate flooded out into the street. Here and there one could hear blanks being fired. Barricades were built in every street amidst outcries from the enemy.

The Law School and Yuwen Middle School students who had been marching towards the main street in front of the Army Headquarters clashed with MPs at the barricade. The MPs formed a wall of bayonets, and still the demonstrators closed in on them. The MPs fired, shouting at the students to withdraw, but the students were desperate.

"Push ahead, push ahead!"

"Don't fear the guns. Forward!"

The Law School students were the first to storm the lines. A student brought an MP down with a mighty tackle while two or three other students attacked another. Sometimes rifles fell on the ground and were walked on. One of the students went down under a rifle butt but he was soon up again and rammed the husky soldier with his head. The soldier fell like a log, flailing his arms. The strong-headed student also staggered, holding on to his shoulder with his hand. Quickly his friends came and supported him.

At last the line was broken and angry waves of students surged towards Hsinkai Gate, shouting hurrah.

In Honan Street the girl students fought courageously to break the barrier. The police had brought two fire engines and were using water hoses. Several policemen held the fire hoses at both

ends of the barriers and turned on the girl students at random. Some of them even grinned as they wielded their hoses. The girls were faced with hard drenching jets of water.

"Don't dillydally, push ahead," girls cried out from behind, waving clenched fists. As the hands of girls bunched together, Paek Sun Hui ran to a tree.

"Push me up a bit. I must say a few words because we cannot move ahead," shouted Paek Sun Hui, panting as she hugged the tree-trunk. Several friends rushed over to her and put their hands under her plimsoled feet. She clambered up the tree.

"Why do you hesitate? Are you afraid of the water? Let's move ahead fast," shouted Paek Sun Hui, shaking her hair drenched in the downpour. A hard jet of water broke several thin branches and hit her head and face. But she threw back her head and cried death to the enemy.

Gyong Ju who had been in command at the rear came up to the front of the formation. Pillars of water hit her neck. But she shouted to them to advance, waving her hands. The front ranks charged to the second line where the police were lined up, straight through the columns of water. The police fired blanks and yelled to the girls to disperse. At this moment, the Wenkuang Middle and the Fifth Middle students surged forward through Chaoyang Gate, shouting slogans. The civil police from the Police Agency were now being attacked from both sides. Warning the Police Agency and Army Headquarters not to meddle in their strike against the Japanese imperialists, the boy students came up from behind, shoved policemen down as they poured in on the flanks of the girl students' position. The boys and girls instantly merged ranks, amid joyous hurrahs. The policemen could not free themselves from this cauldron and moved about uneasily in the whirlpool of students. The boy students joined ranks and turned about towards Chaoyang Gate again, advanced, crying hurrahs, followed by the girls.

Around this time, the engine depot workers who had fought at Tunhua arrived at Kirin railway station. They came out of the station, elated at having successfully disrupted the railway project. One of them had his arm in a sling. Gi Jun's face was sunburnt. Full of fighting spirit he was leading the workers. Both Cha Duk Bo and Sin Dong Ho looked strong and sturdy. Cha Duk Bo's tunic was torn at the back, and had been stitched together with the thin wire used for fixing on luggage tags. When

they were a little way from the station, they heard the noisy shouts emanating from the new quarter of the town. And they saw flags fluttering on the roofs. They walked a little further on and heard hurrahs in the centre.

"We're lucky. The battle is in its height. Let's show what the working class can do." Gi Jun said as he walked at their head. Even the worker with the sling called out loudly for a fight, waving his good arm.

As they marched towards the new quarter the workers saw a fierce fight near Chaoyang Gate. The Wenkuang Middle and the Fifth Middle students who had helped the girls to break through the barrier were fighting the Japanese constabulary. The constables had put up a barbed wire entanglement, and had brought two fire engines to Chaoyang Gate, and were hosing from both ends of the barrier. The engine depot workers came rushing at the men with the hoses. The constables lined up at the barrier threatening to fire if they did not back down. But the workers ignored this and attacked the Japs. Some workers managed to get the fire hoses and turn them on the Japs. And when the water hit them, the Japs fled, gasping or fired blindly before they fell under the impact.

Gi Jun shoved several constables into a puddle under the Gate wall which the Japs themselves had made. He grabbed another Jap by the neck and knocked his head against the Gate until it bled. Sin Dong Ho, too, fought hand to hand with a constable in the knee-deep puddle. The two gripped each other's necks and belts and scuffled, splashing in the water. Sin Dong Ho jerked up the constable and grabbed at his belly. The Jap kicked in the air with his soaking wet boots and tried to grab Sin Dong Ho's head. Then Sin pummeled his leg and shoved him into the water.

At last the barrier was broken. The students got over the barbed wire or climbed over fire engines and streamed ahead. They had united with the workers with cries of joy and loud hurrahs. Gi Jun was embraced by the students, tears glistening in his dark eyes.

The joint ranks marched towards the railway station, and then, at the crossroads, turned towards the Japanese consulate.

The Law School and Yuwen Middle School students broke through the barrier at Hsinkai Gate. From that direction waves of people flooded towards the Japanese consulate. All the barriers had crumbled and the scattered ranks had merged into a

powerful formation. The new quarter was again a sea of people. The area around the Japanese consulate and the Japanese streets were packed with demonstrators, shouting slogans and hurrahs. In many places students were making speeches from wooden boxes. One student spoke from the roof of a Japanese shop.

In the street in front of the Japanese consulate, the very place where Kim Ik Chol had spoken in Japanese, Pak Gwang Sik stood on a wooden crate denouncing the Japs in a long speech. And when Pak Gwang Sik got down, Sin Dong Ho took over, though his whole body was drenched in muddy water. For a few moments he looked around at the masses of people. Above his dark red face, locks of short hair blew softly in the breeze. Clenching his hands so that the blue veins stood out, he drew a long breath, and in emotional tones recited an impromptu poem.

*I did not know that
The struggle was such a storm,
The struggle was the song of life.
The struggle was a wonderful spark
That lights the dark,
The struggle is a locomotive
Steaming into the future.*

*At last we have found this road.
Led by genius of revolution
We, the downtrodden, the insulted
Freed from the pool of pain,
Standing like giants gathered at this square.*

When Sin Dong Ho began to recite the crowd fell suddenly silent and listened. All eyes were on the poet. Sin Dong Ho's name was passed on in whispers among the girls. In fact, Sin was as well-known to the girls as to the boys. He had been known a little as a poet, but had become much better known when he had suddenly left school and worked at the engine depot as a foundry man.

"Move over a bit, would you? I can't see who's reciting."

Paek Sun Hui knew who was he and she could see him and yet she elbowed through between her friends, her eyes moist. To her Sin Dong Ho looked like a giant, like the statue of a hero, the august sky behind him with its floating white clouds.

For a second, Sin Dong Ho watched the crowd, tears shining in his eyes. Then suddenly he thought of his family and inspiration deserted him.

"Carry on."

"Why stop now? Come, carry on."

There was a murmur among the crowd at the feet of the poet. The tears trickled down his cheeks. He clenched his fists. And with his glittering eyes he carried on.

*Why are my both cheeks so wet
On this square bright?
What is this pain
That tears my heart in twain?
I see a sea of saddened eyes,
Eyes longing for life
In the inferno of the poor.*

*Never let me forget
This sea of faces looking up
Without a groan or a tear
Enduring the flames that burn their meagre flesh
Clinging to lives
That are torn to shreds.
Silent as stones.*

Sin Dong Ho stopped. The sea of faces gazed up into his.

*O unforgettable faces,
Faces that have declared revolution!
Waves of faces whose red hearts are overflowing
Ranks of faces lined up solid in this square
Ranks that will rise like the waves of an ocean loudly
overflowing.*

*However bestial the Japs
They will not stop the angry waves.
A tidal wave will overflow all dykes
And smash, wash away the enemy fortress into
little pieces.
It is the tide of youth in revolution,
Eternal youth!*

Sin Dong Ho shook his fist and a smile touched his eyes and pushed aside his tears. There was thunderous applause. The foundry men and maintenance workers held him shoulder high as he jumped down off the crate. Everybody talked noisily about the birth of a revolutionary poet. Paek Sun Hui felt a lump in her throat. Her eyes were blurred and she could not see. She felt like crying and was pushed aside by waves of people, stepping on each other's feet.

Soon the ranks began to move. One column marched towards Chaoyang Gate past the railway station, the other for Hsinkai Gate through the Japanese quarter. The drenched banners had dried out by now and danced in the wind. But people's clothes were still wet, so was the girl students' hair. The columns marched quickly ahead. The front rankers moved off almost at the double, having apparently received instructions.

The column that had come from Chaoyang Gate reached the stadium first and crowded in. Comrade Kum Song had already started his speech.

"We expected the constables to interfere in our demonstration and we thought the Army Headquarters might work hand in glove with the Japanese imperialists. As we had expected they were fully mobilized to stop our demonstration today. We are now fighting an enemy armed with bayonets. They are committing intolerable barbarities right now."

He had just received a report of the arrest of Kwon Sim, and it was very much on his mind. Kwon Sim had been at his lodgings duplicating an appeal and just at the time the demonstrators were entering the new quarter after breaking through the barricades at Hsinkai and Chaoyang Gates, he was arrested.

"Comrades, we must not flinch. Even bayonets cannot withstand our united strength. History knows no instance of such tyrannical frenzy gaining the upper hand. We must push this fight to victory and lay bare the aggressive intentions behind the Kir-Hoe line. And we must put a stop to the project, and show the courage of Koreans, their might as a nation."

His speech rose gradually and then reached its climax. Hear, hear burst out among the audience.

The column that passed Hsinkai Gate now surged into the stadium, which was now full to overflowing. The column of girls led by Gyong Ju was the last to arrive, shouting slogans; they had come up Niumahang Street.

At this moment groups of Japanese constables leapt out of the back-alleys and charged towards the back of the platform where the crowd was thinnest.

"Those blackguards, where are they going? Stop them. Comrade Kum Song is in danger." Gyong Ju cried out as she ran forward clenching her fists.

"Catch the first one, Comrade Kum Song is in danger," the girls behind her shouted too. The girls raced forward like the water that breached the dam. Gyong Ju overtook the first Jap, grabbed his jacket and would not let go. The Japanese pulled at the jacket skirt to get free and run but Gyong Ju clung on and would not let go.

"Catch hold of the others, too, and hang on. Don't let go of them whatever happens." Gyong Ju kept shouting to her friends. Other girls followed Gyong Ju's example; three or four of them had tackled one of the constables and were having a scuffle, and scores of policemen found themselves caught in the firm grip of girl students. The girls grabbed their rifle butts, threw dirt in their eyes or struck them with their shoes. It was indeed a desperate fight.

Gyong Ju had already been wounded by bayonets and blood was dripping from the backs of her hand; her clothes were wet with blood. A dozen or so girl students held on to hit the constable Gyong Ju had caught.

"He is getting away. Catch him!" Gyong Ju cried again. Over the top of the building she could see the upper half of Comrade Kum Song up on the platform, speaking.

I must protect Comrade Kum Song! she thought. I must, at all costs, protect him. She was almost crying. Her eyes shot flames. She dashed like a bullet, clenching her fists. But a rifle butt caught her on the back and she choked up. Her hands went up in the air before she fell on to the ground.

Noting the scene, the engine depot workers and the stevedores moved out of the stadium to come to the rescue. They ran forward shouting "Kill 'em, kill 'em!" The constables got angry and fired blanks. But when they saw the grim-faced crowds of people running towards them they began to run. The people running after them were shouting "Catch 'em, catch 'em!"

And in the stadium the banners fluttered more fiercely in the evening wind and Comrade Kum Song's voice rang out louder and more powerful.

CHAPTER XVII

HYMN

1

The Charity Hospital into which the wounded had been taken was seething with people. The lot in front of the hospital was crowded with students, and there was no room to set foot in in the entrance hall or courtyard both of which were packed with students, engine depot workers and stevedores. Groans filtered out of the ward. The entrance to the ward was crowded with girl students who peeped in and wept, bringing their faces on each other's backs. Those who were standing in the courtyard, too, cast anxious glances at the ward. Pak Sung Hun of roundish build came out of the ward into the hall. He took off his spectacles and wiped his perspiring face with a handkerchief. He had been doctor all his life but he had never received a shock like this. This was partly because his daughter had been brought in injured by a bullet, and yet, as doctor himself, he could not but feel as if he was somehow related to the demonstration.

Pak Sung Hun came into the waiting room, the skirts of his white overall fluttering. There were the principal and Glacier from Yuwen Middle School and teachers from other schools in the room, among them the woman principal of Gyong Ju's school who had tried to prevent her students from going out on the demonstration, warning that students must not get involved in politics.

"How are they? Is anybody critically wounded?"

All the teachers asked anxiously, crowding round the doctor.

"I don't know yet. But don't worry too much. I can assure you that we shall save those precious young people. Devotion makes a flower bloom even on a rock, as a saying goes...."

"They say Gyong Ju from my Girls' Middle was wounded; is it serious?"

"To which school does Gyong Ju belong?"

"Oh, yes, you don't know about her well." The woman principal took off her thin silver-rimmed spectacles and hastily wiped her tears.

"Don't worry too much. Just be seated and do smoke. We doctors are responsible for the students' lives...there won't be any tragedies," Pak Sung Hun said, again taking his handkerchief to wipe away the beads of perspiration from his balding brow. Then he took something out of a drawer of the desk in the corner and went out.

In spite of Pak Sung Hun's comforting words, everybody sat smoking, looking grim. The principal of Yuwen Middle School did not normally smoke, but now he was on his third cigarette. He just drew the smoke into his mouth and blew it out. Glacier kept stalking up and down behind the others. He had an impression that a new history had begun. He thought he would have to review everything that had happened before his eyes, would have to reconsider the colossus called man. He had never witnessed such human strength. He had beaten about the bushes of history but he had never seen such human might, human passion and human dignity recorded. He had, indeed, been awe-stricken. How can I teach a genius who fosters this strength, he asked himself. I have nothing to teach him. What is the good of imparting the knowledge humanity has already accumulated. Lost in these thoughts, Glacier continued to pace up and down the room. Through the open window the cries of the boiling masses kept coming in from the direction of the Sungari. It seemed that the peasants of Changtou Village, Lichia Village and Huiyang-tung, who had come from the far side of the river, were now crossing it again.

Blood transfusions were being given in the ward. Gyong Ju did not know when the needle was driven into her vein. Her eyes were closed and the lips in her waxen face slightly parted. She was breathing hard and her shoulders rose and fell frequently. Her face was clean because the nurses had wiped it as soon as she had been carried in, but her hair was still smeared with blood and dirt.

"Oh, mother..." groaned the girl in the next bed.

"All right. Endure a bit. You'll feel better soon," soothed Pak Sung Hun, watching the drops of blood entering Gyong Ju's vein.

"How can I control my anger, Father," Yong Suk suddenly sat up in bed. She looked so excited that she might do anything. Pak Sung Hun rushed over to his daughter, followed by the nurse.

"What is the matter with you? Can't you lie down?"

"You don't know how I feel, Father. How can I back down from the fight? Who would understand my anger?"

"Are you out of your senses? Don't you know you are suffering from heavy internal bleeding? Lie down this minute."

"I am quite all right. Why do you try to keep me here?"

Yong Suk pushed back the arms of a nurse who was trying to push her into bed and rose to her feet beside the bed. But she had a terrible pain in her side and fell into her father's arms. Her father caught her.

"You cannot stand up. Why do you behave like this?"

"Father...."

"Oh, yes, don't cry!"

Pak Sung Hun soothed his crying daughter and winked to the nurse to put the pillow in the right place. Then shaking his head, he laid his daughter down in the bed.

"Father, we are Communists. Communists who cannot lose fight. Do you understand our feeling?"

"Um, I know, I know...."

"Then, why do you ask me to stop fighting and lie down in bed?"

"Oh, yes. You will fight again. And you will not be defeated by the Japs."

Pak Sung Hun held back his sobs. His daughter's words had never moved him so deeply. He soothed his daughter with an effort and turned away, mopping his brow.

In another room where there were several wounded boy students it was noisy. A doctor was applying splints to a broken leg. These students had chased the constables and fought with them in a back-alley in order to rescue the girls. The student who had a splint on his leg suddenly sat up and cried out. He was looking goggled-eyed, for constables. Another student was so angry that he struck the iron bedstead with his fist and cried.

"Get out of my way, will you?"

Paek Sun Hui pushed her way through the thick wall of people at the entrance to Gyong Ju's ward. There was no room to move. But she rubbed her head and managed to squeeze through the crowd and into the ward.

She had carried Gyong Ju in on her back, and had returned. She was in the same dirt-smeared clothes she had come in from the demonstration.

"She hasn't come to yet, Gyong Ju!" murmured Paek Sun Hui in a fearful tone, approaching Gyong Ju.

"Um, don't call out to her," Pak Sung Hun sternly warned. He was again concentrating on the blood running through a glass tube.

"Is she all right, doctor?" Paek Sun Hui asked.

"Why not...."

"But why is she breathing so fast, sir?"

"She is all right; she got a confusion on the head and has lost consciousness, but her heart is quite all right."

Paek Sun Hui was still worried, however.

From the boys' ward flowed out singing voices.

*The people's flag is deepest red
It shrouded off one martyred dead*

When they got to the chorus, Yong Suk jumped up on bed in the girls' ward and joined in. A girl student who had been lying beside her sat up, too. As still another student who had been receiving an injection rose, the nurse was terror-stricken, gripping her arm. Soon the mixed chorus shook the whole ward. Even the students who had been waiting in the courtyard were starting to join in, when one of the doctors came running out and shouted at them to stop and not to excite the patients.

Paek Sun Hui hurried up to Yong Suk and put her arm on her shoulder. Walking together step by step, they sang.

*Then raise scarlet standard high
Within its shade we live or die.
Let cowards flinch and traitors sneer
We'll keep the red flag flying here.*

"Stop. No more...."

Pak Sung Hun raised his both hands in an effort to stop the girls. But they sang louder and louder. Both in the boys' and girls' wards, the students put their arms on each other's shoulders.

Neither Pak Sung Hun nor any other doctor nor the nurses interfered again. The doctors blinked their eyes and one of the

nurses turned away and sobbed. The faces of the people in the courtyard were flushed and the excited teachers in the waiting room craned their heads out of the window to watch the ward from which the singing rang out.

"Undying eagles," mumbled the principal of Yuwen Middle School.

Presently the hospital became quiet.

Hard pressed all day long, Pak Sung Hun, feeling very tired, went to the consultation room and threw himself into an armchair. He lit a cigarette. His heart was still so full that his hand shook slightly. What was taking place before his eyes was beyond expression. In all his life he had never experienced anything like this. Since his patriotism drove him to Kirin, he had treated uncounted numbers of people connected with the Independence Army but he had never witnessed such a stunning event as he had seen today. He was astonished at the spiritual world the young people were in. There was something noble about them, but he could not understand exactly what. Does this come from their youthful vigour? he wondered. No, vigour can hardly create such a thing. Then, what enabled the youth to possess such a marvellous thing? Is that the strength emanating from what they call truth? What, then, is truth?

Pak Sung Hun could not distinguish that truth from the image of the great genius. The same genius who had once visited him and given such a great shock was shaking the whole country like this today. Pak Sung Hun took off his hat in reverence. Profoundly thoughtful he blew out a cloud of smoke.

Comrade Kum Song came to the hospital accompanied by Chae Gyong and Choe Jin Guk. Pak Sung Hun opened the door and ushered them into the consultation room.

"Thank you very much for all the trouble you are taking, doctor."

"Oh, Comrade Kum Song!" Pak Sung Hun was moved and blinked.

"I am sorry I could not visit you often."

"Please don't apologize...." Pak Sung Hun wiped the corners of his eyes in which the tears were shining. Only then did he ask them to be seated. He busied himself pulling out a cigarette package and pushing forward the ashtray. A doctor came in and reported that Gyong Ju's pulse was becoming normal.

"Is she still unconscious?"

"She is still in a coma, sir."

"Um...don't worry. If we can't save that student, we are not doctors."

Pak Sung Hun gave new treatment instructions and let the doctor go out. Then he lit another cigarette and spoke.

"I am extraordinarily moved today. I have never experienced anything like this in my life."

Comrade Kum Song laughed boisterously. Then he changed the subject.

"Is anybody very seriously wounded?"

"There are some. But we will get them well. I am sure we can...."

"I think I should see the patients, doctor."

"Of course, you must."

Pak Sung Hun got to his feet and slipped on his white coat, staring at Comrade Kum Song the while. He had done this when he last met him, but he wanted to know whether he had something different from ordinary youths. He had such gentle eyes yet did such a tremendous thing! But the moment Comrade Kum Song turned away, he groaned, because he saw a bright glint in those gentle eyes, that obviously was not ordinary.

So, he is different from common youths, he thought, nodding, as he left the consultation room.

They all followed him out of the consultation room. The lamp-lit courtyard of the hospital was still astir with people.

As Comrade Kum Song went into the boy students' ward, all the patients who had been lying in bed sat up. Pak Sung Hun warned them to calm down. But they began to get excited, their faces twitching. Comrade Kum Song went up to one of the students. The patient gripped Comrade Kum Song's hand in both of his and cried, "Comrade Kum Song!" That was all he could say.

"Don't get excited."

"The revolution has just begun, and look what shape I'm in! I have never hated my own body as I do now. Those damned rifle butts broke my leg," shouted the student, hitting at the bedstead.

Comrade Kum Song barely managed to soothe the student and get him to lie down again. Then he went over to another bed. The other student too took his hand and was at a loss for speech.

Comrade Kum Song felt a pain in his heart, as if he was running up a steep slope.

A young snub-nosed student was lying asleep in bed. Comrade Kum Song stood by the head of the bed for a while.

"He has lost a lot of blood, but he kept singing, so we gave him a whiff of chloroform." Pak Sung Hun explained in whispers to Comrade Kum Song.

"Where was he wounded?"

"In the abdomen."

Comrade Kum Song put his hand on the student's forehead and looked at him for many moments.

In the girls' ward Gyong Ju opened her eyes. She looked leisurely around for something.

"You have come to, student?" inquired the doctor, looking down at Gyong Ju. Only then she saw the doctor's face.

"This place is...."

"This is a hospital."

Gyong Ju closed her eyes again.

"I think she'll recover soon," the delighted doctor told the nurse and went out of the room. He was soon back with Pak Sung Hun following. Then came Comrade Kum Song and his party. They stood round Gyong Ju's bed. But she lay there as if asleep, her lips still slightly apart. They stood beside her bed without a word.

Comrade Kum Song was silent and looked down at the girl thoughtfully. Chae Gyong spread his sister's clenched hand which stuck out from under the quilt.

The girls' ward was quiet. All the patients were asleep. Yong Suk who had been given a sedative by her father was asleep. Comrade Kum Song made a round of the beds with Pak Sung Hun. He stopped at each bed and looked at the pale face for a long time. At Yong Suk's bed he tucked in the edge of the quilt.

"This is my daughter."

"I know. A very good comrade."

"Her mother died last year, so she is the only one I can rely on."

Pak Sung Hun bent a little and stroked back his daughter's forehead with his hand.

When Comrade Kum Song returned to Gyong Ju's bed, she had opened her eyes.

Everybody was strained and looked down at the girl's face. Again she looked round her.

"Do you recognize me, Gyong Ju?" asked Chae Gyong bending forward.

"Brother...." Gyong Ju faltered out and stared at him wide-eyed.

"Are you feeling all right? How is your breathing?"

She did not reply and her regular teeth caught at her lower lip. When Chae Gyong stretched himself, Gyong Ju looked up at everybody around her. Her eyes stopped at Comrade Kum Song, and the blood came up to her face, which made her look more like her usual self.

"Comrade Gyong Ju!" said Comrade Kum Song. But she remained silent, only staring at him with flaming eyes. Then her face gradually turned pale. Her pale cheeks quivered and the tears trickled down the cheeks.

"Don't cry, Comrade Gyong Ju."

"I...I'm not crying," murmured Gyong Ju, still shedding the tears.

"You breathe hard, don't you, Comrade Gyong Ju?" he asked again.

"No...." She shook her head softly on the pillow.

"Here I feel a bit...."

She could not speak coherently. After several moments she went on.

"Because of me, because of me...."

Gyong Ju bit her lower lip. Then her eyes looked strained as if she was expecting him to speak.

"Comrade Gyong Ju, I understand how you feel without your saying anything. We will step up our struggle. You must stay here till you are better with the same spirit of fighting the enemy. You must get better quickly and rejoin in the fighting ranks. Then you will win the revolution and vent your anger on the enemy who caused you this pain. Right now, your struggle is to stay in bed."

"I understand. I will. And I am not seriously wounded." She kept watching him with strained eyes. She was no longer shedding tears. Though she insisted that she was not seriously wounded, the hearts of Choe Jin Guk and the YCL chief of the Law School ached and they felt as if they were hearing her last words. They patted the corners of their eyes. Comrade Kum Song could not hide the tear-drops in his eyes. Chae Gyong was the only one who did not show tears. Chae Gyong had felt like crying just before, but now it seemed that the tears had set in his heart. Only

his hands shook and sweat came out of his pores. The struggle will continue, you needn't worry, he said to himself. Why do you deceive yourself so? You are breathless and your shoulders are heaving, but why do you say "no..."? Why don't you say yes if you are having trouble in breathing? Only these thoughts came across his mind.

Comrade Kum Song was the first to leave the bedside; he could not remain there long because he was getting increasingly emotional. He saw another student in bed before he came out. He paced back and forth in the hall with an aching heart, fearing that Gyong Ju had deceived him with regard to her wound, and the doctor, too, with regard to Gyong Ju. He could not overcome his anxiety.

He kept stalking up and down the hall when he heard a groan from the boys' ward he had visited. It was a shout rather than a groan. He hurried back to the ward, opened the door to find the young student who had been lying in bed so quietly, sitting up in bed and crying that he got a stomach-cramp. The doctor and nurse tried hard to quieten him. As soon as he saw Comrade Kum Song, the boy threw himself into his arms, weeping.

"You know, those blackguards hit my belly with their rifle butts. I felt no pain then. And I hit one of them in the pit of the stomach, shoved him down and trampled upon him. But after I was brought into this hospital my belly aches more and more. I wonder why."

Comrade Kum Song touched his belly to find that his lower abdomen was swollen like a gourd.

"Don't cry. Please calm yourself and lie down."

"I feel as if I had a red-hot iron burning in my stomach."

The nurse gave him another anesthetic. Then he became quiet and lay down. He stayed seated for a long while by the head of this young student's bed. He pulled out his handkerchief to wipe the patient's forehead and replaced his hand sticking out of the blanket.

Comrade Kum Song came out of the boy students' ward. He went over to the waiting room. Chae Gyong and others were already there. Everybody was silent. So was Comrade Kum Song, who entered the room and went over to the window to look into the darkness outside. Chae Gyong picked up the cigarette packet on the table and lit a cigarette, though he did not know how to

smoke. The clock on the wall struck two. Choe Jin Guk suggested going back. But Comrade Kum Song did not reply and continued to gaze into the dark outside. In that deep darkness he saw faces of Gyong Ju, the young boy student, and of Yong Suk; the faces he had seen just before loomed before his eyes. He saw pale-faced Kwon Sim resisting the Jap police using his walking stick, and as he was hit in the face, falling down. Also, he saw the scene he had witnessed at his lodging house. The bookstands which had fallen on the floor, torn books, bundles of papers face down, with countless footmarks on them; the room where the appeal had been duplicated was still more ghastly. Both blood and duplicator ink splattered around, and the duplicators lay on the floor with their handles smashed.

Comrade Kum Song wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. He left the hospital with his party. Still speechless, he walked down the wide Peita Street which was bleak and deserted. The late autumn wind blew. The leaves of the trees along the street wept in the wind and a carriage ran past. Once in a while pedestrians went by, talking in undertones. There were quickly moving shadows in the back-alleys. Once the veil of darkness was lifted, cries would burst forth in this street. And underneath it was a forceful breath.

But Comrade Kum Song's heart was heavy. The sights in the hospital haunted him. His heart ached at the thought that he was treading the very street where they had shed their blood.

Struggle! struggle was necessary. He thought that unless greater flames of struggle, greater waves of optimism enveloped in this street, how could he lift this heavy burden from his mind?

That night he sank deep in thought, and for a long time he walked along the grassy bank of the Sungari on which the waves were running high. If the frenzied enemy makes a frontal attack on us with bayonets, we would have to change our tactics, would we not, he thought to himself. We must have a method to guide the masses to charge forward, in a greater struggle, while containing and hitting at an armed enemy attacking us front on. The waves of the river broke at his feet. The waves, too, cried all night long, as if appealing to him. It was almost dawn when he made a new decision and walked back with vigorous steps, unaware that his feet were soaking wet.

Fresh preparations were made for a still bigger demonstration. Comrade Kum Song had set another target of attack, in order to lift this struggle to new heights. He had decided to boycott Japanese goods, while pushing ahead strongly with the fight to stop the Kir-Hoe railway line. In other words he had put up another slogan so that the angry masses would direct their attention to the Japanese goods flooding in as the feeler for aggression against the continent. Thus he planned to set a number of targets on the body of Japanese imperialism and hit them simultaneously. Furthermore, he issued instructions to organise pickets and prepare sticks for the forthcoming struggle.

On his instructions all the YCL branches and AIYL organizations made flawless preparations for the new demonstration. Both organizations and individuals moved with one purpose, they were like the tempered steel.

At night the leadership stayed in the basement of the Yowang Mausoleum receiving reports on the preparations from different organizations and sent out new instructions.

Comrade Kum Song kept meeting messengers. Among the messengers were students, workers, young peasants. The demonstration was being prepared on a tremendous scale. Kirin and adjacent villages were on the move, making themselves ready for the event. From Liberation Village came a report that the village was in a festive mood. Peasants gathered on the school grounds and were waiting for orders from Kirin, playing peasant music and dancing in groups. There was another report that the principal of the school who had once been crestfallen because of the transfer of Kang Chang Su to Chialun, had recovered his spirits and was rousing the villagers.

The leadership was pleased to receive a report from the Girls' Middle School. The preparations for the demonstration were being speeded up under the direction of Paek Sun Hui, and the bespectacled woman principal of the Girls' Middle had been politically awakened and had joined in the preparations.

"I opposed only for my students' sake...but having seen that great demonstration I felt as if I saw some immortal idea. I think I saw truth—that truth that is often spoken about in the abstract." A short girl student with small eyes and dimples on both cheeks mimicked the woman principal, and Comrade Kum Song laughed aloud and all the other members of the leadership joined in.

Intelligence arrived from the YCL branch at the wharf, that Chun Taek was going to leave on board a steamer, and that on his way back he would pick up the members of the AIYL branch in Harbin and members of study groups at several wharfs.

There were also reports about the public's reactions.

"It will be a bigger one!"

"It will be on a larger scale!"

The citizens made these exclamations openly in shops or in the street. At some shops old people got together and talked cheerfully about the "attack". The organization of pickets and preparation of sticks had leaked out and had become a full-scale rumour.

At Wenkuang Middle School, Pak Gwang Sik was training picket on the school grounds, assisted by Cha Duk Bo, who had been appointed chief picket.

As soon as he had received the reports from Liberation Village and Wenkuang Middle School, Comrade Kum Song sent several of the leading members there.

"The preparations have to be kept secret. Otherwise, the enemy might get ready, too, and we might be prevented from making our preparations. Go there right away and put things right. Secrecy, secrecy and more secrecy."

Strained hours flowed. They were getting more and more restless and excited. Very late that night Comrade Kum Song came out of the basement of the mausoleum and paced briefly under the eaves of the main building. At such times Cho Chang Jin and Li Song Nam became extra vigilant and kept watchful eye on the sloping road or the forest.

One night Comrade Kum Song came to Li Song Nam and whispered, "Aren't you tired, Comrade Song Nam?"

"Not at all."

"Have you had your supper?"

Choe Jin Guk had brought him supper that evening, but Comrade Kum Song had it sent to Li Song Nam. And he was asking him about it.

"Yes, I did," replied Song Nam in a vigorous voice. But, in fact, Song Nam had not eaten it, but had put it by the balustrade of the terrace. He had thought that he would have to take the supper to him down in the basement later at night when there were fewer messengers. And yet, he had replied that he had eaten supper. He wondered what to do. He reproached himself for not having told him the truth. He dropped his head and scraped earth with the heel of his shoe.

"You look a little stronger now...."

Comrade Kum Song felt Song Nam's shoulder.

"You must do your bit in the future revolutionary struggle."

"I will...."

"I was told that you fought very well at Tunhua. I am truly delighted. You must continue to study well and never lose your pride as worker and you must become a good revolutionary."

"Yes, I will..." answered Song Nam biting his lip. Whenever Comrade Kum Song made similar remarks, tears welled up in Song Nam's eyes.

A little later Comrade Kum Song went down into the basement. Song Nam quickly wiped away the tears and wondered how he could get Comrade Kum Song to eat supper. He wondered and wondered but he could not hit on a bright idea, so he went past the terrace to Cho Chang Jin. Cho Chang Jin was staring ahead, leaning against a tree, and whirled around to find Song Nam.

"Who was out there just now?"

"Comrade Kum Song."

"Did he say anything?"

"Nothing special. But he hasn't eaten any supper yet. What shall we do?"

"Take the bundle down to him a bit later."

"But he asked me if I had that supper and I said yes."

"Never mind."

"I told him a lie and conscience pricks me."

"Ho ho ho. Then I will take it to him later. Sit down here, Comrade Song Nam."

Cho Chang Jin pushed Song Nam down by the shoulder and sat down beside him.

"Every time I see you, I remember my dead brother."

"You had another brother besides the one I know?"

"Yes, there were three of us. One was just like you. Comrade

Song Nam, do you know what I have been thinking, looking at those stars in the sky?"

"What?"

"I have an unforgettable memory...."

Cho Chang Jin hugged Song Nam's shoulder tightly and began his story. Cho Chang Jin's home village was on the east coast of Korea, where the breakers hit the sandy beach in front of a string of hovels. Cho Chang Jin's father was always out at sea. When the waves were high, Cho Chang Jin would take his younger brothers to the top of a hill behind his house and look at the sea where their father had gone. When it rained, the three brothers would squat under one great big conical reed hat and look at the huge waves. Sometimes their father came back while the brothers were waiting. The dark-faced father would hold the two younger brothers to his fishy bosom and then go home. But usually he anchored his boat at midnight. The three brothers would be lying asleep in their clothes in the hovel, not knowing their father was back. Then their father was lost at sea. The three brothers waited for him to return. For two years they would go up the hill and wait for their father day and night. The stars always shone brightly over the horizon at night. When it was misty the big and little stars would blink like eyes. Then, the three brothers felt as if the stars were talking to them and ran down towards the shore, calling their father. "Hey, big stars, and little stars, is our father there?" The brother who died would cry bitterly and squat down at the water's edge.

"I remembered those stars, and I have been looking at the sky."

"But how did your younger brother die?"

"He died a few years before I came here. I was educated at a private school there, but he had been unable to attend school; he had a yellow face, he was ill for a long time before he died. We laid him to rest in the thicket of pines where he used to wait for father, and maybe he is still looking up at the stars and longing for father...."

"Poor creature."

"Ho ho. There is nothing poor about it. What's the use of pitying the dead? But, Comrade Song Nam, I don't look at those stars with the same feeling I did then. And I am thinking that those stars are like us. No, I mean, I feel we ourselves are exactly the same as those shining stars."

"What do you mean?"

"Look at them. They all of them are studded in their respective positions and burn their bodies and shed their light.

"So do we. We all of us stick to our own positions, and devote ourselves to shedding our light, don't we? That is why the great locomotive of the history, which is called revolution, is dashing ahead. So I am a bright star, and you are also a bright star. And Comrade Kum Song who leads the revolution is the sun in the centre...."

Song Nam thought he had found a great truth, and quickly looked up at the huge vault of heaven studded with shining stars. He was delightfully excited at the thought that he too was a star. He saw the revolution, his own self and everything from a new light. Cho Chang Jin, too, was touched by what he had said. How could I, who used to follow in the wake of those philistines blinded by their political ambition, set out on the genuine revolutionary road and shed light from my own position like a star? The more he thought of it, the more deeply moved he was.

The great demonstration was almost ready. All organizations were concentrating on training pickets. Rumours spread in whispers among students and workers about the imminent action.

Around this time, Yu Dae Yong and Hwang Hak arrived in Kirin from Huatien. So did Kang Chang Su and Li Byong Mo who were active in Chialun. They had been called by Comrade Kum Song. He had thought that it was necessary for those working in the provinces to experience the struggle in Kirin. Their arrival suddenly animated the basement of the Yowang Mausoleum.

Yu Dae Yong had formed many organizations at Huatien. After a big row with the drill instructor, he had left Hwasong Uisuk School. Hwang Hak had followed suit. Since then these two men had hidden themselves in villages to expand the organizations. YCL branches had been formed at various places and AIYL organizations had struck root in almost all the villages around Huatien. Whenever they received letters from Comrade Kum Song, they had worked with redoubled vigour.

Yu Dae Yong and Hwang Hak were sitting in the mausoleum basement proud and delighted with what they had done so far. The slender Yu Dae Yong looked upright even when he was sitting down.

Comrade Kum Song told them that the revolutionary forces must join those settled right in Tunhua so as to spread revolution over the whole Tunhua area quickly and to explore Antu and Holung. He explained his far-reaching plan to explore the whole of east Manchuria.

Comrade Kum Song advised Kang Chang Su and Li Byong Mo to work with Kim Ik Chol to form an organization in Changchun.

While he was speaking, messengers kept rattling down the ladder into the basement. Some of them handed over slips of paper and others made oral reports. Then they received new instructions and climbed up the ladder again.

A girl student started quickly down the ladder, but seeing a crowd of men she stopped halfway.

"Why don't you come down, Comrade Bok Nyo?" asked Comrade Kum Song, sitting there by the candle light, looking across at the open door. Only then the girl crossed the threshold.

"Anything urgent? How are all our comrades?"

"There is nothing urgent. Comrade Gyong Ju had a slight fever today."

Bok Nyo had been assigned to the hospital to look after the patients.

"What about other comrades?"

"They, too, are much better than yesterday. Comrade Hak Gun has slept all day because his belly has stopped aching."

"Thank you for your information. Remember me to the comrades. And please convey my thanks to the comrades who are taking care of the wounded."

Having seen Bok Nyo off, Comrade Kum Song faced his comrades again.

"Well, let us discuss our assignments. We must be ready for a lot of trouble. We cannot be revolutionaries unless we fight battles that will wash us and melt and temper us."

He then shared out assignments, taking various situations into account.

He didn't have a minute to spare. He was always short of time and hard pressed by mountains of work. The storm of history is created in this situation.

Next day.

The glassy surface of the Sungari reflected the morning glow. The whole city began to bubble from early dawn. The streets

and back-alleys were still in dark, but there was movement everywhere.

The morning sun threw its first rays on the base of the western wall where a column of people was seen moving, their heads moving past the yellowish wall. As yet it was a loose formation; The heads appeared at brief intervals. The workers' ranks came surging out of the engine depot. They stopped short at a wide grassy area near Chaoyang Gate. An early morning breeze blew over the grass. From time to time Gi Jun's deep voice was heard, but very quietly.

The weather was fine.

Suddenly loud cries were heard. Everything seemed to have soared up from underground. Peifa Street, Niumahang Street and Tungtien Street were covered with flags and banners. A sharp sound of beating some metal sounded among the masses of people in the winding road from Tesheng Street and Shichun-ri. In Honan Street and Liangmihang Street slogans were shouted without cease. People's eyes glittered like the razor's edge and they wore fearful expressions.

As the sun rose over the horizon the formation of peasants pushed their way through the West Gate and the ferries started to bring peasants across the river. Today peasant music rang from the boats.

"Now, let's line up quickly." Those responsible for forming ranks were yelling here and there. The leaders of citizens' formations had been assigned by the YCL. Among them were Kang Chang Su, Yu Dae Yong and Li Byong Mo.

Kang Chang Su was supposed to get them to form ranks in front of the cinema, but he could hardly manage because there were too many people. Some people quarrelled over how they should line up—in columns of two or three. Craning his neck with the protruding Adam's apple, the lanky Kang Chang Su appealed to the crowd to listen to his words of command.

"Who is that fellow?"

"Barber at the railway station," replied a citizen out of sheer speculation.

"A rather progressive barber. Must have been a sort of affected by socialism, eh?" Citizens commented in undertones, looking at Kang Chang Su.

Li Byong Mo was forming the ranks of citizens in an alley behind the stadium, when he was harshly scolded by Bo Bae's uncle,

Li Byong Mo had asked the old man to take off his horsehair hat in case it got damaged. The old man was furious.

"You son of a widow, you want me to go to the demonstration in a topknot without a hat? During the March the First Movement I put on my horsehair hat and shouted hurrahs."

"But I am afraid your hat might get damaged."

"Why should mine get damaged...."

Li Byong Mo gave up. There are some queer people in Kirin, he thought. If we had such a feudal doford in Chialun, I would take his hat off on the spot and boil it in hot water and throw it away—with this thought he scurried about, shouting, the veins standing out on his neck.

The pickets were fully prepared, and studded the side streets like stars. Once the enemy appeared they would encircle and nail them down. Therefore, at the slightest sign of movement they shouted and signalled to each other. Cha Duk Bo, in a yellow worker's tunic and a cap with a vizor the edge of which was open, was carrying a stick. From time to time he rushed around. He thought he would be satisfied if he could destroy the Japanese consulate by mobilizing the pickets.

Today everybody in and out of the town was in a new fighting spirit, out to get a boycott going against Japanese goods. Most of the leaflets agitated people to reject Japanese goods.

"We are against their building the Kir-Hoe railway!"

"We boycott Japanese goods!"

Shouted slogans could be heard all round.

The demonstrators carried Japanese goods, each throwing some few items up into the air. They were goods they had been using. Pencils, knives, combs, toothbrushes with the trademark of Lion, *Jintan*, towels and all sorts of goods flew into the air and fell in showers. The students marched on, stamping on them. Following the example of the students, citizens began to scatter the Japanese goods which they had brought with them. The *Pigeon* cigarette packages, *Jintan* containers or handkerchiefs went into the air. The streets were littered with Japanese goods. They were crushed, twisted or smashed to pieces. In front of the Japanese consulate somebody had destroyed a bicycle. The handle bars were twisted and the chain was cut to bits. The rear wheel was crumpled and the tires ripped off and thrown away. Japanese goods kept flying up at the Japanese consulate wall.

The whole streets were aflame with a new struggle.

Now the propaganda teams started working on Korean and Chinese merchants. They had intended to awaken them and persuade them to join in the forefront of the campaign to boycott Japanese goods. Propaganda team members crowded in and out of shops.

As the great demonstration started on its way, Chun Taek had already kindled the flames of struggle at several wharves and his ship was nearing the wharf Harbin. The YCL branch at the Kirin wharf had reported to the leadership that Chun Taek would bring in members of the AIYL from Harbin and study circle members from various wharves, but because of the fast changing situation, Chun Taek had received different instructions from Comrade Kum Song. Chun Taek had arrived at the Harbin wharf, his final destination; he had sailed up the Sungari where the yellow mud waters swayed like a sea. He was going to spread the spark of revolution and throw this continent under the grey sky into a turmoil. He threaded through two and three thousand tonners and blew the whistle with a leaping heart. He hoped Hong Tae Son, a stevedore at the Harbin wharf, who always smiled showing a protruding tooth, would come out to the wharf when he heard his whistle.

Meanwhile, Kwon Sim had been interrogated in the basement of the Japanese consulate again today. As usual, Kunihiko undertook the interrogation with one of his subordinates who recorded questions and answers. He had not yet started to subject Kwon Sim to any form of torture—beating, pouring water into the mouth or singeing the skin. The day when he had been brought in here, the two colonels from the Ministry of the Army proposed to put him to torture, Kunihiko said an adamant no.

"I will take care of this gentleman. He is not an object of harsh treatment, so, you just don't meddle. This gentleman might be of great value to us in coping with this incident."

Saying this, Kunihiko prevented the reckless soldiers from running wild. Then he took Kwon Sim down to the basement, where there were quite a number of rooms like prison cells. Kunihiko chose a wide room, into which he took Kwon Sim and even brought a chair for the prisoner to sit on. So Kwon Sim had been detained in this room since the day of his arrest.

While in Seoul, handling the case of the Korean Communist Party, Kunihiko had seen a number of articles written by Kwon Sim. He had realized the profundity of the author's analysis of

reality, scientific accuracy of his theory and his lofty mental pursuit. And striking his desk with his fist, he had said to himself that Kwon Sim was a big fish. In an endeavour to arrest Kwon Sim, Kunihiko had spread the net not only in Seoul but over every corner of Korea. He had even arrested Kwon Sim's parents and held them for interrogation. But Kwon Sim had remained at large. And now he had caught him, right here in Kirin. Kunihiko thought he had caught a live tiger quite unexpectedly. And now this black-guard made desperate attempts to get information about the organization led by Comrade Kum Song.

"Well, tell me quick. How is the network spread?"

"Don't ask me such questions. As I have said up to now, Communists don't answer such questions even if they die."

"Then I won't ask you. Just tell me one thing. Where are your agitation points?"

"That I can't tell you either."

Kunihiko seemed to be dumbfounded: he knitted his brows and glared at Kwon Sim. Ever since his arrest, Kunihiko had done his level best to persuade him to confess this, but the answer had always been the same.

"Have you thought about your happiness?"

"Of course, I have. The Communists think about the sublimest happiness man can ever think of."

"Do you think you enjoy happiness at this very moment?"

"As long as I am serving the revolution, I am happy. And not only at a moment such as this but even on the gallows."

Kwon Sim glared at Kunihiko, with flaming eyes. He had sunken eyes but they shone brightly in their deep sockets. Kunihiko banged the desk and got to his feet. Then the door was jerked open, and a fellow came in, a bucketful of water in his hand. Today Kunihiko had told one of his men to wait.

"Try to stand it. You think I am a merciful Buddhist saint? I am a merciless Japanese prosecutor. Don't give me that stuff about happiness."

Kunihiko shouted and winked at his man.

"Beat him to death!" cried he, stamping his feet. There was a dangerous look in his eye, and his close-clipped hair bristled and quivered. His black and beastly blood was running through his veins.

The whipping started. The whip struck Kwon Sim on the back, on the back of his head and on the face. Kwon Sim had not

even enough time to groan. He fell from the chair and rolled on the floor. Sticking out his lower lip, Kunihiko paced around the torturer and the tortured and looked maliciously at Kwon Sim. His cheeks were twitching.

"Happy even on the gallows? Humph, an out-and-out scion of Marx." Kunihiko ridiculed, and stamped out of the door.

Now, in the consul's office, a final confab was going on to discuss ways and means of suppressing the demonstration in Kirin; the special envoy of the Railways Ministry and the colonels from the Ministry of the Army who had been to Tunhua were seated facing the special envoy from the Foreign Office and the consul. Today they were joined by a top official of the Manchurian Railways. The angriest of all were the army colonels. They both had blood-shot eyes and they kept banging the table. The Manchurian Railways official and the Railways Ministry representative were gravely concerned over the interruption of the railway project by the workers' walkout. Clenching their teeth they discussed in undertones all possible ideas for quenching the flames in Kirin.

As Kunihiko appeared in the consul's office room, they turned to him.

"Well, did you get any information?" inquired one of the colonels, looking hard at Kunihiko.

"I am afraid we must give him a baptism of fire and the stick."

"You mean he hasn't blown out the whereabouts of the hide-out?"

"Not yet," faltered Kunihiko, and threw his emaciated body into an armchair. The colonel castigated Kunihiko, asking him if he thought he had come here for a picnic.

That day Kwon Sim was severely beaten. He was forced to drink gallons of water. After the beating, the Japanese torturer straddled his victim, twisted his nose and poured water into his mouth. And he urged him to tell the whereabouts of Comrade Kum Song's hide-out. Kwon Sim bleached out and did not rise from the pool of water on the wooden floor.

Kwon Sim woke up at midnight. At first he did not know where he was and how he had come to wake up in this darkness. He only thought he had opened his eyes; he could not understand anything. After a long while of hard thinking he realized that he had been beaten all day long and forced to drink water. He touched his clothes. They were dripping wet. And he touched the floor and the water splashed. Soon his whole body started to ache. He

felt pains in the torso, and an intolerable pain in the thigh pierced by a bayonet when he was arrested. The thigh was terribly swollen. He could not move his neck. He made an effort to get up, but he could not move, because his body was as heavy as if carrying a big rock.

"What's wrong with me? Am I dying this way? Die? Like this?"

Kwon Sim summoned up all his strength again, and barely managed to sit up. It was pitch-dark and he could not see a thing. He could not see the chair on which he had sat or the desk at which Kunihiro's man had recorded the interrogation. He felt around here and there. His hand touched a square thing. It was the leg of a chair. It seemed to be his chair. Leaning on the chair he pulled himself to his feet. His whole body trembled and hot breath came out of his mouth. He could not stay upright for long and he fell down again.

"Am I going to die? How can I die? Now that the revolution has just started, must I part with it?"

He saw Comrade Kum Song's image approaching.

"Comrade Kwon Sim, cheer up. The revolution might demand of us that we suffer much greater pain than now. But we must endure. Then, the revolution will tide over the crisis and move ahead."

"Thank you, thank you. I can endure this pain. I can endure still greater pain, and even death." Kwon Sim whispered to himself. His heart beat warmly. He stood up again. He felt as if Comrade Kum Song was standing there before his eyes, and step by step he began to walk. He was anxious to see him. He walked on and bumped into the wall. He used all his strength and pushed the wall, but it was immovable. His eyes emitted flames. He pushed the wall again and then sat down limply.

"Comrade Kum Song!" cried out Kwon Sim and looked around in the darkness feeling as if he were on a precipice.

He saw the motley crowds of nationalists, members of the Independence Army and Communists. He saw himself panting among them, his face white as a sheet. They faded from view, and he saw Comrade Kum Song who visited him and held his hands the morning after he had delivered his abortive lecture. He is the saviour who guides and awakens us! A genius who has brought about such a revolutionary upswing in less than two years! A revolutionary leader who has creatively applied Marxist-Leninist theory to all the features of the Korean revolution and mapped out unique policies and strategy and tactics and carried them through! Led

by the great leader, the people are crying out. Stream of demonstrators are determined to fight Japanese imperialism to the finish, waving flags and banners, banners—the demonstrators calling "Comrade Kum Song", "Comrade Kum Song". Suddenly Kwon Sim found himself standing in a golden sun. The shafts were dazzling and resplendent. Again he rose, trembling to his feet. He went up to the wall and stroked it with his feverish hands. But this time it was not a wall. Something crumbled down and his feet took him out into an enthralling light. Comrade Kum Song's image became vividly clear.

"Oh Korea, oh Kōrea! Korea whose heart dried up! Now you have given birth to a true son! The revolutionary sun has risen out of the bloody sea, shining across our land, our whole three thousand *ri*. The sun has risen to shine for all the world."

Kwon Sim stroked the wall with both hands and shed hot tears.

3

As the demonstration in Kirin spread more and more sparks, the press reported it under bannerlines. It was reported that after Kirin a demonstration began in Harbin. The masses of demonstrators were more stirred up. Rumours went around that demonstrations had burst out in Pyongyang, Seoul and Pusan. Stevedores talked about an incident in which their colleagues in the Harbin wharf dumped Japanese goods overboard, which had been loaded on a 2,000-ton cargo ship.

Today the propaganda teams told a new story to the merchants:

Your rivals are Japanese merchants. Those Japanese who have shops in the new quarters of the town are damaging your business. How can you stand up to their competition in selling Japanese goods? You must prevail over the Japanese tradesmen. Only by overwhelming your rivals, can you develop your trade. If all citizens of Kirin rose up in the fight to keep out Japanese goods, the Japanese merchants would go bankrupt. After all, this campaign is aimed at knocking down your rivals, so you should be in the forefront of this campaign.

As their vital interests were mentioned, the merchants began to warm up. They shouted slogans such as "Don't sell Japanese goods," "Let's have a showdown with the Japs." On the other hand, the peasants fought fiercely in this demonstration. The peasants from across the river and from Liberation Village had brought food by ox-carts and cooked meals here for the demonstrators. At night the Vocational School outside Tesheng Gate became very animated. The peasants lodged here and blew a hot air from down, playing their peasant music.

During today's demonstration the peasants from Changtou Village stopped a wagon near the railway station. On their way from Chaoyang Gate to the station, they spotted a wagon running from the direction of the Japanese quarters. The vehicle was driven by two long-eared mules. The wagon looked suspicious, so the peasants asked the driver to halt. He pretended not to hear and whipped the mules. Cha Duk Man leapt out of the crowd of young people, grabbed the driver by the neck and dragged him down off his seat.

"You bastard, if you are asked to stop, you should stop. Why do you wield the whip? What's your load?"

There was no reply. He did not look like a driver. Cha Duk Man jumped up onto the wagon and checked the load. There were huge crates. He peeped in through a crack on one of the crates on the top. It was full of aluminum pots.

"Oh my, these are Jap stuff. This guy is carting them away from some shop. You dirty driver.... Let us check this load." Cha Duk Man shouted at the peasants. The peasants dragged down the crates and asked the driver to which shop these goods belonged. Some of the peasants claimed that he was a Jap. And he did turn out to be a Jap. When his cap was pulled off, his greasy long hair stood up and swayed. People around him shouted that they should beat him to death. At this moment several pickets came running out.

"Leave him to us, we'll take him and beat the hell out of him. You take care of the load."

The pickets took the Jap away.

The crates were opened and there was a cataract of Japanese goods. At first the peasants argued to throw the goods into the Sungari or to set fire to them, and finally decided to take them into the town. They were to be distributed to the masses who would get rid of them for themselves. The peasants kicked the

smashed crates and threw the goods onto the wagon. Presently, the peasants following the wagon, passed through Chaoyang Gate into the town with loud shouts.

Simultaneously with them, the formation of students and citizens were coming out towards Honan Street like angry waves, shouting slogans. In the middle of the citizens' formation Bo Bae's uncle's horsehair hat shone in the sun. He had taken an active part in the demonstration yesterday and today, and his hat was undamaged. You could see old Li Gap Mu carrying a walking stick, Li Son Yop in a soft hat, Li Pil Su with a triangular moustache and the fat So Gun Ha. Once in a while old Li Gap Mu raised his stick and cried out "Drive out the Japs."

"Chuck 'em out!" "Chuck 'em out!" was heard among the peasants. Cha Duk Man and his colleagues began to scatter things. Paper umbrellas and students' uniforms flew over the heads of the students. Soaps, face-powder boxes, dresses and all sorts of other things kept flying overhead. The students destroyed them with their knives. Rolls of cotton fabrics were thrown over the heads of citizens.

"Rip 'em up, rip 'em up!"

The shouts rose and the fabrics were unrolled. The fabrics with their motley of patterns were trampled underfoot or covered the heads of people. Then they were cut to pieces. The whole wagonload of Japanese goods were destroyed in a few moments, and the street was littered with rags.

The struggle raged for days. The masses never slackened their spirit and fought furiously.

As the demonstration became fiercer and fiercer, the wounded in the Charity Hospital could not remain in bed. All the patients got out of bed and went out and stood along the back wall. The doctors and nurses could not dissuade them from doing this, and had to bring desks and chairs for the patients to stand on. So they saw the demonstration, cheering and joining the demonstrators in shouting slogans.

Gyong Ju stayed in bed, listening to the cries from outside. The shouting was so loud that the windows rattled. Gyong Ju felt as if she was out there in the ranks of demonstrators. The scene came back to her when the fire engines had come and used hose-pipes to stop the marchers, her friends all dripping wet but still shouting all around her. Paek Sun Hui had shouted, too, craning her neck among the comrades. The wet face had turned pale.

Her voice sounded as sharp as the edge of the razor. Every time Paek Sun Hui shouted her regular beautiful teeth glistened. A little way off, Pak Gwang Sik was shouting. Then Choe Jin Guk cried out, holding the pole of a banner. Her brother climbed up on the roof and scattered handbills. The handbills came fluttering down over the heads of the people. But why did her brother come nearer to the eaves? What if he fell down? But he did not fall and he kept scattering handbills. Comrade Kum Song was standing behind her brother. His speech was heard. Banners rose from underneath and loud applause burst out. Comrade Kum Song raised his hand high and waved it. In order to take another look at Comrade Kum Song, Gyong Ju stood on tiptoe, jostled hither and thither in the avalanche of people. The sweat ran down and she breathed heavily.

This was not a dream; it was a vivid picture unfolding before her eyes. The cries continued outside. She could even hear the footsteps. Obviously the demonstrators were right underneath the wall of the hospital.

A doctor came in with a nurse. They sterilized the wound and gave her an injection. Gyong Ju closed her eyes. A little later Pak Sung Hun, too, came and examined her and then went out again. There was a brief silence, and the cries outside stopped. Several girls came running in the room. They asked her how she felt and they reported about the rising mood of the masses, and advised her to lie still and not to worry.

"Won't the enemy attack us?"

"It seems the enemy are trying to obstruct the march in Tungtien Street. But what can they do? Our pickets are very strong."

"Workers and peasants are still out in the demonstration?"

"Of course. They are more and more high-spirited. The peasants from Changtou Village caught a wagon loaded with Japanese goods and got rid of it."

"Just now I saw a young man shouting slogans riding on a big-eared mule. Ha ha ha."

The girl students chattered for a while and were gone. They visited Gyong Ju like this every day. Now that Gyong Ju's wound had passed the critical phase, everybody felt relieved and the girls had an urge to keep her informed about everything concerning the demonstration.

A little later one of the Girls' Middle students came darting in, panting.

"How do you feel today?"

"A little better. Why do you come so often? I know you are very busy. You don't worry about me; I am just lying in bed in the hospital." Gyong Ju said holding her friend's hand.

"But I can't set my mind at rest. By the way, our struggle has become a bit difficult."

"How?"

Gyong Ju was taken aback and stared at the girl. Her jacket sleeve was torn and her skirt was smeared with dirt.

"The demonstration has run into a snag. Well, scores of the Army Headquarters Police blocked the street and hit us with their rifle butts. They are furious, too. And they say our pickets and the MP's are fighting hand to hand, in Chaoyang Street."

"And where are your ranks fighting now?"

"Right behind this place—in Peita Street—listen. Oh, I think they are pressing the enemy hard again. I must go...."

The girl put something down by Gyong Ju's pillow and ran out. It was a paper bag of biscuits.

Gyong Ju shut her eyes and sank in thought. She felt the warmth of their comradeship. Even in the midst of this grim battle they came to see her in the hospital at all costs and they remembered not to come empty-handed. Like this girl, all the other comrades brought her some small comfort. Who but revolutionary comrades in the same ranks would have such considerate care? Unbidden tears welled up in Gyong Ju's eyes.

Again loud cries were heard—in Peita Street, no doubt—piercing girls' voices. Gyong Ju strained her ears and listened. Then she could hear loud slogans. Gyong Ju clenched her hands tightly, and gritted her teeth. She thought she could not be indifferent to her colleagues checked at the barrier. She lifted her head, and with a sustained effort, sat up on bed. She barely managed to get down on the floor. She felt dizzy and, holding the bedstead, shut her eyes. After a while she opened her eyes and stood up by herself. Beads of perspiration stood on the tip of her nose. She stroked back the locks of hair that covered her face. Then she found some hairpins by the pillow and put up her hair. She picked up a white cotton jacket from the bed and slipped it on. She was going to put on into the blue skirt her brother had brought, but on second thoughts, she decided to put on the dark cotton serge skirt.

With an effort Gyong Ju went out of the room into the court-

yard. She took a look at the backyard, where students, boys and girls, were looking out, standing close to the back wall. There was nobody in the courtyard. Through an open door she saw the back of Pak Sung Hun in the treatment room. He seemed to be talking to the nurses. More cries were heard as ever. Gyong Ju quickly walked across the courtyard to the entrance hall.

In the lot before the hospital dozens of peasants were chattering; among them were some students. Banners were fluttering over the roof of a general shop in front of the lot and shouts of hurrahs were thundering out. Gyong Ju feared that if she walked across the lot, the people would discover her and bring her back into the hospital. So, she did not go in that direction, and instead, turned round the corner of the hospital and went up a side-street.

She was within a stone's throw of Peita Street, but to Gyong Ju it seemed miles. She walked a little way only to stop and lean against a wall to get her breath back. She wished somebody would carry her to her destination. Presently she came to a slight hill. But she walked on up the sloping road to avoid the hill, she would have to make a large detour to get to Peita Street. She felt weak and she was breathing hard. She walked up, supporting herself on a red brick wall beside the road. She had to walk quite a way to the top, where there was a wide view. The broad Peita Street unfolded before her eyes. The slope was cut off at a cliff.

Meanwhile, in Peita Street the girl students who had to stop their march were making a lot of noise, cursing the MPs. Some students made speeches, waving their hands. In front of a banner Paek Sun Hui was shouting out some words. The MPs were lined up at the department store; they were bringing in some materials by lorry to reinforce the barrier. A truck came running in, carrying some thing like barbed wire, unloaded it in great haste. One of the MPs shouted at the girl students, apparently asking them to disperse.

On shaky legs Gyong Ju went ahead towards the cliff. She held on to an electric pole with one hand and raised the other.

"Comrades!"

Gyong Ju's throat was dry, and she felt as if a mass of fire was coming out of the throat. Again she shouted "Comrades!" Only then all those who were down below focussed their eyes on her. "That's Gyong Ju!" "That's Gyong Ju!" The girls exclaimed in surprise. Those who had been squatting dashed towards the base of the cliff. There was a great commotion. What was Gyong Ju doing

up there? She was badly wounded, critically ill! they shouted. Many girl students tried to climb up the stony cliff only to drop.

"Comrades, what are you doing there? Break through the barrier and advance! If we remain here like this, the enemy will only get wilder."

As Gyong Ju began to cry out, the excited students became quiet. They turned their burning eyes.

"Comrades!"

Gyong Ju was choked up and interrupted her speech. Her legs shook and her whole body trembled. She bit her lips and stood firm.

"Let us go ahead, comrades! At a time when the struggle has reached the climax, how can we stop our march even for a few moments? How can we show this attitude to the enemy? Don't give the enemy a moment of respite. And push ahead vigorously. Grip the enemy like a vice, throw sand into their eyes, hit them with bricks...let us break through that barrier. Let us make our lives, our youth bloom into revolutionary sparks. Forward towards victory! Forward towards the future!"

Gyong Ju raised her hand and repeatedly pointed to the barrier where the enemy was concentrated. Her face turned paler.

"Right. Let's go ahead!"

"Let's go! Forward!"

The girl students shouted in response. Many of them shed tears, looking up at Gyong Ju's pale face.

"Go back in, my dear! If you don't come out and shout there, we won't be defeated by the enemy."

Paek Sun Hui, too, shed tears.

"Sister, do you think we are frightened? We are only waiting for the boys to come..." shouted a junior from the Girls' Normal who had climbed up almost to the top of the cliff, looking up at Gyong Ju. She slipped and fell and wailed at the bottom.

Having wiped away her tears, Paek Sun Hui cried out to her colleagues to line up. Instantly the surface of Peita Street surged forth like furious waves. Banners rose and slogans were shouted.

"Stop the Kir-Hoe railway!"

"Death to all Japanese imperialism!"

"Boycott Japanese goods!"

The girl students closed in on the barrier and like water breaking through a dam, gushed forth and buried the pack of MPs. The girls were resolved to die and the enemy was powerless before

them. Paek Sun Hui hit a ferocious MP on the head with a flag-pole and shouted "Forward!" Girls even climbed up on the lorry parked in the street. Several of them got in and threw coils of barbed wire at the MPs. Two girls got up on top of the driver's cab and cupping their mouths with their hands, shouted slogans. All the MPs seemed to have been melted in the boiling cauldron. Now none of them were in sight and the girl students burst through like a turbulent river. They made for Chaoyang Gate where banners waved and slogans were shouted. They were going to join the other columns as soon as possible.

Gyong Ju stood for a while and watched the scene, then, with an effort she turned back. Suddenly, earth and sky began to spin and everything looked yellow.

"What's the matter with me?" she wondered and tried to collect her senses. But when she was going to move, the earth revolved again. She did not know that she was bleeding again and the blood ran down to her feet. Gradually she lost consciousness. She felt as if a black veil waved before her eyes and also as if somebody was calling her. She used every inch of will-power and took one step after another. Then suddenly everything turned black and she lost consciousness. A young poplar supported the girl but then let go of her. Lying on her belly in the grass Gyong Ju whispered with the dazzling sun, her lips trembling.

4

Down in the basement of the Yowang Mausoleum the candle was still burning. Melted wax continued to flow down from under the flame. All present analysed the demonstration of the day with grave expressions. Everybody had a foreboding that the struggle was approaching a critical phase, that there was a showdown ahead. The faces of Gi Jun, Chae Gyong, Kang Chang Su, Choe Jin Guk, Yu Dae Yong, Hwang Hak, Pak Gwang Sik and all the rest were darkish red and grave. Their eyes, when they moved, shot lightning. Their mouths were pursed up.

"Well, let all of us go out tonight. Since the enemy showed a sign of taking full-scale action, we must not be slapdash in preparing for tomorrow's fight. Let us go to each organization and

examine the readiness of the pickets and make arrangements for taking decisive attitude."

Comrade Kum Song's voice rang through the basement with greater dignity than ever before. Everybody looked at him but they were silent. They seemed to be making their resolves in the silence. As they had expected, the enemy had suddenly intensified their armed repression. The enemy had been so furious that the march of the demonstrators had been checked and, at some places, there had been bloody melees. According to the intelligence report the Japanese consulate was bringing in troops from somewhere in order to defeat the demonstration. So, there was not a shadow of doubt that tomorrow's fight would not be easy.

One member of the leadership after another left the mausoleum basement and disappeared into the darkness.

"Don't cry..." Cho Chang Jin standing beside a thicket soothed the young Song Nam in whispers.

"I am not crying. But should anything happen to the sister, who will lead the Girls' Middle or Girls' Normal? That's that, but how terrible!"

"Do you think you are the only one who feels that way? I feel as if my heart is going to break, I can hardly stand. I was at the hospital and saw her in a coma, her face white as a sheet. As I saw her, I had a thousand thoughts. And I longed for my dead brother...oh, hell, let's not talk about this damned thing. Dedicating one's life to the revolution cannot be the same as the death of my brother. For the sake of the revolution, the death of a revolutionary comrade is far more heartrending. So we must avenge him. We may shed tears of blood, but we must retaliate, we must hit hundreds of thousands of times harder at the enemy."

"You are right. But just now, you talked as if you are indignant over your brother's death, but he too was starved to death, because of the Japs and capitalists. Why is he not pitiable?"

"Right, you are right. It is because of the enemy that our father did not return home from the sea. Comrade Song Nam, anyhow we must grit our teeth. We must retaliate mercilessly against an enemy who deals out pain and death." Cho Chang Jin whispered, shaking his fist. His warm breath touched Song Nam's cheek.

After the departure of the leading members, the basement was bare. The flame had melted a thick wax candle and the wick hissed in the flood of wax that covered the desk top.

Comrade Kum Song walked up and down the room, lost in thought. He saw Gyong Ju's face as he had seen her today. His heart was bleeding.

Gyong Ju won't die. She will never die. Who can break the wings filled with such passion! Who can tear the wings that shine with wisdom! But his heart did not calm down. Chae Gyong was absorbed in writing at the desk. He was preparing a new handbill. The light had almost gone out but he kept writing. At the sight of the bent back of Chae Gyong seated on the chair Comrade Kum Song's heart was rent the more. Chae Gyong must be very unhappy, he thought. He is the one who has the worst heartache.

"Comrade Chae Gyong, stop now, and let's go out in the street."

"Yes, let's. We must go to the Vocational School first. I wonder how the peasants are spending the night there. Comrade Jin Guk went over to them, though."

"Of course, we must go there, but I am worried about another place."

Chae Gyong collected the papers and got to his feet. The light was gone, and the basement got pitch-dark. Comrade Kum Song stretched his hand and squeezed Chae Gyong's hand.

"That's all right."

"Let us support each other."

With a warming heart Chae Gyong crossed the threshold, his hand in Comrade Kum Song's. It was impossible that Chae Gyong did not know what Comrade Kum Song was thinking about with aching heart. Both had tried to hide their feelings, but each could feel the agony of the other. Chae Gyong quickly brought his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Comrade Chae Gyong, we are revolutionaries. So we must have firm faith and think of our revolutionary comrades."

"I know. I am grateful to you for your firm conviction that my Gyong Ju will live. If she rejoins the fighting ranks to sing the song of the revolution, then I will...."

"Let us have the conviction. I don't think misfortune will ever befall her."

Chae Gyong felt a huge lump in his throat at Comrade Kum Song's words of love and faith; he could hardly repress his feeling.

Coming out of the dark courtyard of the Yowang Mausoleum, Comrade Kum Song stopped under the tree where Cho Chang

Jin was standing guard.

"Thank you for your trouble all these nights."

"Oh, it's nothing. It is my revolutionary duty."

"If anybody comes here while we are away in the street, please ask them to wait."

Saying this, Comrade Kum Song went down Peishan Hill.

When they got to the Vocational School, Choe Jin Guk was making a speech to the peasants who were gathered in an auditorium as wide as three or four classrooms side by side; he warned them that the demonstration was going to enter a do or die battle. The audience, who filled the place to capacity, listened attentively, their eyes focussed on the platform. Choe Jin Guk often shouted and banged down on the table, his face flushed and his eyes flamed. While Comrade Kum Song looked around, the speaker took two gulps of water from a glass on the table; he must have been very thirsty.

"We should not interrupt the speech, should we? We will drop in again on our way back and check the peasants' bedding." Comrade Kum Song spoke in undertones, plucking at Chae Gyong's sleeve. Chae Gyong turned back immediately and followed him. They passed through Tesheng Gate into the town to find the street quieter. The silence that carried a storm seemed to be straining towards morning.

The next day.

Again vast waves of demonstrators covered the streets. In view of yesterday's experience, they had prepared themselves to dash ahead whenever enemy might attack, and they were pushing ahead fiercely. They were not shouting slogans; they were raising cries to pierce the sky. Workers, peasants, students and citizens all clenched their teeth. The fact that Gyong Ju had become critically ill again had roused a burning resentment in the students' ranks. The girl students were particularly enraged.

"We have nothing to fear. Push ahead! Ahead!"

"Bash them if they resist. But why is there no one in our way today?"

The girl students' column made a bold dash with a lot of noise. The number of banners had increased overnight. The poles were thick, and could be used as weapons.

The merchants had also risen up in the town. They too formed their ranks and held up their banners.

"We don't sell Japanese goods."

"We reject Japanese goods."

These slogans were shouted and the banners rose continually.

There was a large general store in Peita Street; the proprietor and a woman, seemingly his wife, were throwing rubber shoes out of their shop into the street. There was an avalanche of rubber shoes. Pencils, tooth brushes and *Jintan* packages flew out, too. From the warehouse of a shop that faced the cinema, crates of Japanese wholesale goods came rolling out. A few days ago, a Japanese wholesale merchant had received a shipment of goods at the railway station, and put them there, with the consent of the owner instead of taking them to his own warehouse. This had been exposed by the now vigilant merchants. The demonstrating merchants were rolling the crates of goods out of the warehouse. Some of the crates burst and goods gushed out.

A similar warehouse had been spotted in Honan Street. Cunning Japanese merchants had packed up all the goods in their shops and carried them out to warehouse; they had promised the owner of the warehouse to give him a few crates of goods free if their goods were safe. But citizens in the neighbourhood had exposed them. Here, Law School students brought out crated goods. The demonstrating students were enraged, shouting "Burn the crates!" "Smash 'em!"

A team to transport Japanese goods was formed. The wagon which had been captured near the railway station now worked for this team. Cha Duk Man of Changtou Village and Chong Gum Sok of Liberation Village hurriedly loaded the wagon with goods, jumped up on to the driver's seat and whipped up the mule. The wagon flew towards the Sungari. They stopped the wagon and threw the goods into the river. Rubber shoes, motley-coloured fabrics, Japanese wooden clogs, neckties, children's clothes, enamelware and gramophone records floated down the stream.

Meanwhile, the wharf was aflame with struggle. The stevedores started throwing "Manchurian Railways" equipment into the waters of the Sungari. They all had positively Herculean strength. The crates were heavy enough to need two men and a shoulder pole, but they heaved them up on their shoulders and raced to the pier like flying tigers. Thunderous splashes were heard unceasingly at the pier end. The crates made rattling sounds in the water for a while and sent up bubbles.

"Ha ha ha. How exciting!"

Choe Song Gun stood on the pier and laughed, each time

he had thrown a crate the way a Hercules might throw it. His face gleamed with sweat.

In the centre the people piled up Japanese goods and set fire to them. The Japanese kerosene with the Pine trademark was very useful for burning Jap goods. They just piled them up and poured a bucketful of kerosene over them, and that was it. There was nothing that wouldn't burn. The town was filled with the smell of burning oil and rubber. The clouds were low and there was no breath of wind, so the revolting smell hung around.

Then the enemy rushed out. The Army Headquarters MPs and the civil police from the Police Agency, working in close coordination, surged out from all directions. On top of that the mounted constables who had been held in the Japanese consulate compounds in reserve, came trotting out. It was a formidable battle. The pickets fought desperately. At first the pickets overwhelmed the enemy in numbers. Their guns and swords could not check the pickets who attacked them in front and in the rear. Everywhere the enemy were crushed by the pickets' deceptive tactics. They would chase a fleeing picket, into a back-alley where they were beaten up and scattered by other pickets waiting in ambush. As soon as a picket set upon them, they were in a ring of encirclement.

Near the cinema in front of Chaoyang Gate, a picket tied up several Jap policemen and Police Agency cops. But the enemy was desperate; so in some places, some of them got out of the encirclements and smashed into the ranks of demonstrators and ran amok to stop the march, wielding their swords.

The battle was fierce, and even women rose up. They ran about to help the mass of demonstrators, their hems tucked into their waistbands. Paek Sun Gi's mother would fetch water at her house and run towards the main street near the West Gate, sweating heavily. Choe Jin Guk's mother joined other women. She also ran, carrying stones, and bricks in her long skirt. Bong Suk's mother and sister-in-law, too, joined a long line of women.

"We must carry sticks. Well, let's go. Let us go to the carpenter shop to bring some lumber," shouted Bong Suk's mother waving her kerchief. She felt like crying at the thought of her dead husband. He had devoted all his life to the independence movement, but he had never witnessed a scene like this, she thought. I wish to God his soul would come flying down over Kirin to look down on this. She felt very emotional as she led her neigh-

bours to the carpenter shop on the Sungari and pulled down a stack of split logs. The proprietor of the shop urged the women to take them. They ran, carrying bundles of the side splits on their heads. "Kill 'em!" "Hit 'em!" were heard from the women, too.

In Tungtien Street, quite a few enemies leapt into the ranks of the Fifth Middle School. And a dozen or so of them ran into the peasant demonstrators and wielded their swords. It was also reported that in front of the big department store near the Army Headquarters, the cries of the masses were heard and glittering sabres rose over their heads and sliced down. The mounted constables made desperate efforts to disperse the demonstrators. The ranks of the workers from the engine depot and the ranks of the Yuwen and Wenkuang Middle Schools came to a halt and fought the enemy in the area around Peita Street. All the pickets assigned to that area also took part in the fight. The constables waved their sabres overhead the masses, shouting at them to disperse. Some of them ran over the burning Japanese goods. The tails of the horses were singed and added to the fetid smell.

"Don't be frightened, hit 'em. Break the horses' legs!" thundered Cha Duk Bo. His eyes shot fire. The pickets crawled among the masses of demonstrators and hit at the horses' legs. A picket member attacked the horses with a glittering sword snatched from the enemy. He drove it into the hip of a horse. The horse reared up with a shriek of pain. But the bleeding horse ran with a more frenzied speed. The members of the leadership—Choe Gi Jun, Choe Jin Guk, Yu Dae Yong, Hwang Hak, Kang Chang Su and Li Byong Mo threw themselves into the decisive battle. They picked up any iron rod, chunk of wood or stick they could lay hands on and struck the riders and the horses as well. Yu Dae Yong hit a horse on the foreleg so hard that the animal stood up on its hindlegs, shrieking. It dribbled on Yu Dae Yong's cheek and neck, bent its forelegs and hit its nose on the ground, throwing the rider headlong to the ground.

Cho Chang Jin and Song Nam also fought in this battle. They followed close to the mounted police with watchful eyes, to prevent them from rushing towards Comrade Kum Song who stood a little distance away. Cho Chang Jin decided to knock all the mounted police around here.

"Check the horses so that they won't go ahead! Hit 'em! Beat 'em!" Cho Chang Jin bustled about shouting continually.

He crawled with a bent back and suddenly rose to wield an axe. Song Nam ran about nimbly, an iron rod in his hand. More than once he fell while trying to hit the legs of the horse. But he was up again and again looking for more targets.

Finally Cho Chang Jin succeeded in hitting a horse. He pulled out the axe he had driven into the side of the horse, when he was struck on the shoulder by a sabre. The tip of the sabre was thrust into his chest. But he lifted his axe. The second horse rushed past him. Cho Chang Jin crashed the rider's leg in a boot. The enemy raised a beastly shriek. Cho Chang Jin dropped his axe and fell forward. But he jumped up again. His whole body was drenched in blood.

"These sons of bitches...."

Cho Chang Jin trembled. He staggered forth and grabbed the axe again. And he looked for mounted constables. They were now running wild a little distance away, far from where Comrade Kum Song was. Their swords flashed in the sun like white snakes. Cho Chang Jin dragged his blood-stained feet. Students rushed to him to support him, but he thrust them all aside, and wielded his axe. At every step he drew a long breath, glaring ahead. And his steps became slower and slower.

"These robbers! What shall I do? These bastards made me... me like this!"

He stopped suddenly and then paced forward. He squared his drooping shoulder and kept raising the axe. But the axe kept dropping and his arm swung limply.

"Can't I bring forth my strength any more? This Cho Chang Jin...."

He gritted his teeth and stopped. The hand holding the axe swung as before. The axe-handle was also wet with blood.

"Comrade Kum Song!" he cried out and dropped his axe on the ground.

"Comrade Kum Song!" he called again, spreading his legs drenched with blood, though he was unable to keep himself steady. Students ran up to him and held him. Suddenly Cho Chang Jin became limp and his head fell. Song Nam came darting out. He had lost his cap and blood was streaming from under his hair.

"Brother Chang Jin, what's the matter with you?" Song Nam tried to cling to him. But he was prevented by the students.

"Brother! Brother!" Song Nam cried out, writhing. Cho Chang Jin was already dead in the arms of a student. The students ran

carrying the dead man back to a relatively less crowded place.

"Brother Chang Jin!" Song Nam could not follow and tumbled down on the ground. He rubbed the floor with the palms of his hands and dropped tears. Unable to repress his towering rage, he sometimes struck his knees with his fists.

After a while he jerked up his head and looked around with his bloodshot eyes. The horses were still running round and the people were boiling. He trembled. His eye rested on a bloody axe. He was sure it was the very axe with which Cho Chang Jin had fought. He jumped up from the ground and grabbed the axe in his tough hand. His arms had grown thick and tough as steel in the bosom of the working class. Blood gushed up to the arms and the axe held in the hand quivered. Like an angry lion Song Nam darted across to where the horses were running wild.

The grim battles went on.

The news of Cho Chang Jin's death spread instantly among the masses. They cried out for vengeance and became still more furious. Waves of people surged towards the horses, throwing stones and bricks at the riders, and sometimes hit their swords with iron rods.

The enemy's shrieks were heard everywhere. Some of them lost their horses and fell to the ground to be trampled upon or beaten to a pulp by the people.

The students laid Cho Chang Jin's body on the grass in front of the public stadium and wailed striking the floor with their fists. Other students active in the neighbourhood flocked to the spot in a hurry. The Wenkuang Middle School students tearfully called Chang Jin's name. Pak Gwang Sik plucked up the grass, shedding his tears over Cho Chang Jin's face. The dead man had not closed his eyes.

Choe Jin Guk came darting in, followed by Cha Duk Bo.

Soon Comrade Kum Song came in great haste accompanied by Chae Gyong and Gi Jun. Everybody surrounded Cho Chang Jin's dead body. Comrade Kum Song looked at the body for some moments. He was speechless and breathed a long breath, staring at the petrified face of his comrade-in-arms who had gone through so much and had then set out on the revolutionary road. Then he squatted by the body and wiped dirt and blood off Cho Chang Jin's forehead. A little later he hugged the dead man in his arms and then rose to his feet, supported by Gi Jun and Chae Gyong. Comrade Kum Song walked, with Cho Chang Jin in his arms. Nobo-

dy knew what he was going to do. Holding back their sobs, the students followed him. Chae Gyong and Gi Jun flanked him, holding Cho Chang Jin's head and legs.

Comrade Kum Song entered the stadium and laid the dead man on a bench. Then he again looked down at his face and then pushed down his eyes; Cho Chang Jin had closed his eyes at last. Comrade Kum Song called one of standard bearers. When he came, Comrade Kum Song untied the banner. The red banner fluttered and waved before his chest. He looked again at Cho Chang Jin's face, before he slowly wrapped the body with the banner.

Cho Chang Jin was parting with his comrades for ever. He was leaving his comrades, carrying everything precious, hopes, ideal, passion, spirit wrapped up in a red banner. But who among those gathered here would think Cho Chang Jin has left them! Who would ever think that his noble soul did not breathe in the revolution? As he had said, Cho Chang Jin had only gained eternity as a bright star in this great solar system called the revolution. Nobody would forget that bright star, Cho Chang Jin.

When Cho Chang Jin's body was wrapped up, Song Nam came and wailed. He had returned after killing a mounted constable with the axe stained with Cho Chang Jin's blood. Song Nam's wails seemed to be tearing Comrade Kum Song's heart apart.

When one can endure grief, one has in oneself strength enough to endure it. But when one cannot endure grief even with tears, then it will explode all one's feelings, for example in hatred and rage.

Comrade Kum Song's eyes flashed and shot blue flames. A clearcut truth was shouting, a truth which he had long found and fended. It was as clear as the crimson rays that pierce through the dark clouds.

We must take up arms! he cried to himself. If we are to strike at an armed enemy, we must arm ourselves and go ahead to fight the decisive battle. This bitterness, this pain, this agony impressed like black patterns on our revolution, on our optimism—we cannot get rid of this without bayonets. From this height we have arrived at, we must shout again, rise up in arms, and move forward, always forward!

In Peita Street which had been raided by mounted troops, the demonstrators had beaten back the enemy all the way. The mounted troops fled to the bank of the Sungari and the constables fled out of town. The MPs and the Police Agency cops crowded into

compounds at the Army Headquarters. Many of them had been captured and tied up hand and foot. Many of the constables were trembling like leaves under the wall of an inn. A dozen or so Army Headquarters MPs and Police Agency cops had been captured by the demonstrators near Tesheng Gate. The people shouted loud hurrahs. There were voices urging them to knit their ranks more closely. The people's spirits were sky-high and they swayed like an ocean.

At this moment Comrade Kum Song appeared on the top of the high slope in Peita Street. Chae Gyong and Gi Jun stood on a lower rising. Comrade Kum Song looked briefly over the seething masses without a word. An awe-inspiring and forceful voice rang over the demonstrators.

"Comrades, friends!"

"Comrade Kum Song!" "Comrade Kum Song!" cried the masses. Everybody looked up at the top of the slope, wide-eyed, as if at a sun breaking through the clouds. Students surged forth towards the base of the slope.

"Comrade Kum Song! Comrade Kum Song!" hailed many students, raising their hands. Workers and peasants ran after the students, calling to Comrade Kum Song.

A formation of citizens coming out of Honan Street saw Comrade Kum Song standing on the top of the hill. Chong Min Su, So Gun Ha, Li Pil Su and Li Son Yop applauded, waving their hands. Old Li Gap Mu could not walk on and looking up at him, cried out. "Rise higher! So that you can be seen in our whole land, in all our three thousand *ri*! So that all our twenty million fellow countrymen can see you!"

Tears rolled down his face and the old man's long beard which covered his chest shook violently. Women burst out of a side-street behind the public stadium. As soon as they saw Comrade Kum Song on the top of the slope, they took off their hoods and waved them with shouts of joy. Choe Jin Guk and Paek Sun Hui's mothers waved their hands calling his name in emotional voices. Bong Suk's mother who had been running among the women stopped and stood as if stuck to the ground. She felt as if Comrade Kum Song had just stepped on to that spot out of the blue sky (the sky was overcast but to her it looked blue). Looking up at his face, she moved forward, step by step.

"Comrades and friends, we are going ahead vigorously in this struggle. But we are also suffering grievous wounds, too."

Comrade Kum Song stopped. The stormy street bated its breath, and there was silence all around.

"But through our painful losses we have drawn a priceless lesson as to which way our revolution must go. At present, through this struggle we are learning or recognizing the most precious things. Therefore, I believe that this struggle provides us with valuable experience for the advancement of our revolution, for the independence of our country."

He stopped for a while to look around the audience. The people remained silent, looking up at his face.

"Friends, what then are the priceless experience and lessons we have learned in this struggle? We have arrived at the truth that we can only achieve victory if we all get together in a single stream and take the true road of revolution and fight firmly united. It is that if our intelligent and courageous workers, peasants, youth and students, and all who in their hearts truly love their homeland fight with one will, one purpose, united in a single mass of flames, they can prevail over any enemy. So we must hold fast to this truth and push ahead with our struggle. All who truly love their country must rise up as one man in the sacred struggle for liberation of the country, transcending individual or factional interests; we must unite and fight on the true path of revolution."

Shouts of hurrah burst out all round. All clapped their hands and waved banners. It was like a swaying ocean.

Chong Min Su, So Gun Ha, Li Pil Su and other nationalists were lost in profound thoughts, looking back at the bloody history of the Independence Army. Only old Li Gap Mu, who had seen a new dawn, lifted his long beard and looked up at Comrade Kum Song with burning eyes, and engraved his words on his heart.

"Then what should we do now?"

"We must go into the decisive phase of this struggle immediately, shoulder to shoulder, in firmly-knit ranks. Our last target is the new quarter of the town where the Japs are entrenched. We must charge into the new quarter and drive our spears into the final target of our campaign against Japanese goods. The whole of our ranks must rush into this final field of battle. At present one of our precious revolutionary comrades is being held in the Japanese consulate. We must release him, bring him back. We are the Korean people who have unbreakable dignity, tremendous strength, a great spirit and a sense of justice. We must show the guts of the Korean nation. Let all march ahead!"

Cheers burst out down below. The waves of banners soared up and hurrahs thundered. Wave after wave of people surged towards the base of the slope, shouting "Comrade Kum Song!" "Comrade Kum Song!" Uncounted people ran up the slope and surrounded him, with raised banners and loud hurrahs.

"Gyong Ju, Gyong Ju, my dear! Why haven't you come round? How nice it would be if you too saw this scene here!" Paek Sun Hui wept, burying her face on a girl student's back. Bong Suk's mother also wept. She cried out looking towards Fusung.

"Sister in Fusung! Sister in Fusung! Your husband is dead, but you have nothing to be sad about. Neither have I. Because your son has become the sun of our nation...."

Bong Suk's mother longed for Kang Ban Sok so much, that she shed hot tears, holding onto the trunk of a tree.

Noisy and excited, the demonstrators formed ranks. Loud cries rose up and banners were raised. Soon the columns began to move out. One column after another streamed towards Peita Street and Honan Street; the very heavens were shaking. And over this scene, the first snows began to fall. The snow flakes fell on the banners, on the heads of the people, on their shoulders, on faces dyed with blood. Flowers of bliss covered the whole universe. Gentle whispers, affectionate whispers—the *Red Flag* rang from the ranks of students. The *Internationale* was sung by the workers from the engine depot and the wharf. The front ranks of the column were already nearing the new quarter of the town, passing Chaoyang Gate and Hsinkai Gate. Surrounded by Chae Gyong, Choe Gi Jun, Kang Chang Su, Choe Jin Guk, Cho Hak Bong, Hwang Hak, Yu Dae Yong, and a dozen or so pickets, Comrade Kum Song joined the stream of people. The demonstration marched on and on.

Printed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

No. 99322

DUE DATE

NEW BOOK SHELF

OCT 04 1993 OCT 18 1993

APR 14 1994

APR 05 1994

MAY 31 1994

MAY 08 1994

AUG 10 2005

Printed
in USA

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



0039576744

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
THE
LIBRARIES
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
CV STARR
EAST ASIAN LIBRARY